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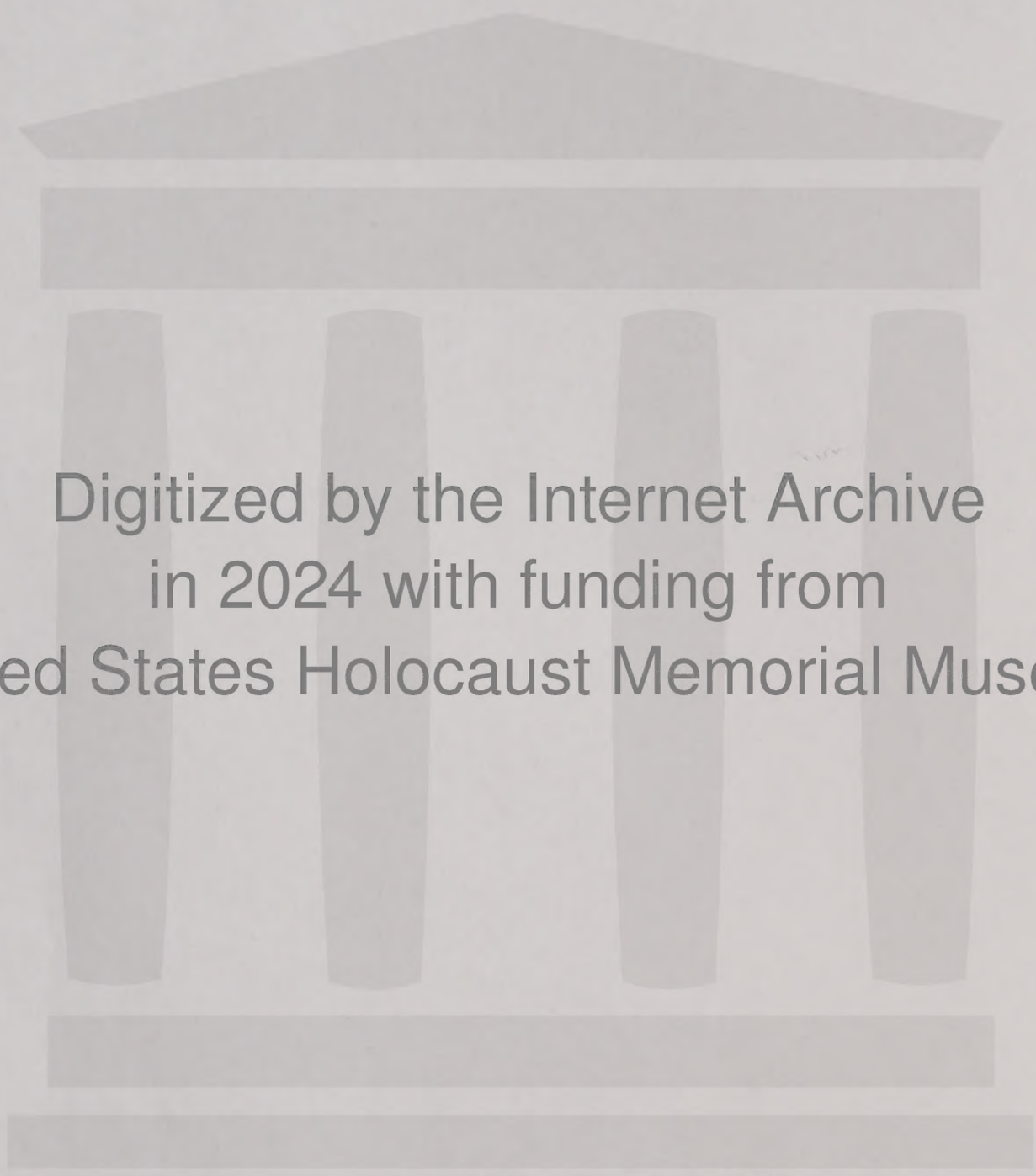
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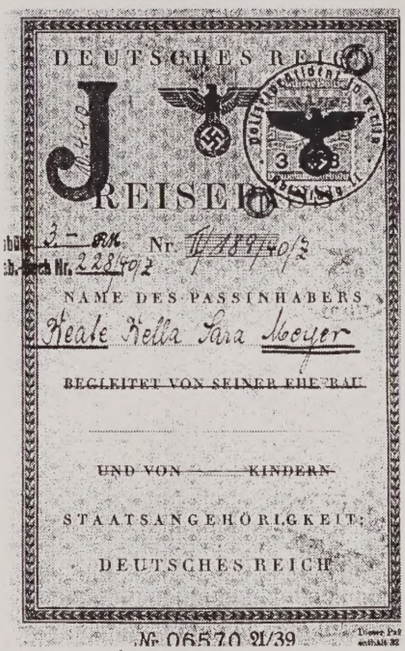
BEATE'S CONTINENTAL JOURNEY
From Berlin To Brooklyn

The Adventures of a German Schoolgirl


DEUTSCHES REICH

REISEPASS

NAME DES PASSINHABERS

Beate Bella Sara Soofer

BEGLEITET VON SEINER EHE-FRAU

UND VON KINDERN

STAATSANGEHÖRIGKEIT:

DEUTSCHES REICH

Unterschrift des Paßinhabers

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß der Inhaber die durch das obenstehende Lichtbild dargestellte Person ist und die darunter befindliche Unterschrift eigenhändig voll

den 10. April 1940

By BEA SOOFER

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Cover

BEATE'S CONTINENTAL JOURNEY
FROM BERLIN TO BROOKLYN

The Adventures of a German Schoolgirl

by BEA SOOFER

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DEDICATIONS

This story is dedicated to the memory of a remarkable person named CLARA KUSCHNER, who with undaunted efforts sustained a German-Jewish family in their darkest hour of need, and sponsored their emigration to America. The journey could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many altruistic German-Jewish ESCORTS, who deferred their own emigration plans to put their protective arms around a group of refugees and guide them on the right path to freedom.

To BENJAMIN and GRAHAM, the youngest members of the Soofer family, and to those who will follow, and some day want to know where their Grandma (OMI) came from!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to grateful acknowledge the contribution of two special people who provided invaluable assistance in preparing this manuscript. Many sincere thanks go to her son, Dr. Robert Soofer, who is a successful author in his own right, and the other is Mr. Monty Meyer for his steady encouragement and editorship

FOREWORD

More than half a century has elapsed since the Holocaust, surely the most egregious period in modern history, and still the world has not learned its lesson. This chronological story, is based on the trials and tribulations, triumphs and tragedies of a family of four during the Nazi onslaught in Germany. The story contains historical facts, some interesting aspects of the life of a young Jewish school-girl, and major events and feelings associated with a long journey. This arduous journey could not have taken place without the painstaking work of the father, whose primary concern was the survival of the family. Also, the journey's success was credited to the indispensable help of an American sponsor, the American Consulate in Berlin, and most important, the enormous assistance given by a wonderful, dedicated organization called the H.I.A.S. - Hebrew International Aid Society.

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

Beate was just a small child when a new "broom" swept her country and much of the world in an unprecedented manner, forcing a dramatic change in her young life. The idleness of childhood turned sour for Beate, an average school-girl living in the beautiful, cosmopolitan city of Berlin, Germany. She led a very comfortable and carefree life, which overnight changed to a life of terror, deprivation of the worst kind, loss of education, citizenship, and simple fundamental rights as a German citizen, just because she was born a JEW.

How did all this happen one might ask? When Beate was born on December 10, 1928, the world was enjoying a relative calm. But, in the early thirties, a dictator named Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany with a master plan to lead the country out of its economic depression, and build an empire of pure Aryan blood on the backs of a mix of minorities who did not fit into his scheme. His effort was to create a "Judenrein Germany" - a Germany free of Jews. And who was a Jew? Hitler declared that anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent was a Jew. Whereas the rabbis went by matrilineal descent, defining a Jew as someone having a Jewish mother.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As we turn back the pages of history to the twentieth century, we find a turbulent time of wholesale murders and appalling desolations beginning in the 1930s., when two vast continents - Europe and Asia - with an increase in populations demanding "Lebensraum" - living space. Expansions into neighboring lands began, annexing foreign soil, and practicing atrocities in a period of genocide.

In Germany, where Beate was born and raised, a disgruntled ex-corporal by the name of Adolf Hitler became a prominent

political figure. He refused to accept the fact that the German army had been defeated in the Great War of 1914-1918. After that war, France the victor, insisted that Germany pay reparations for the wartime damage it had caused. It would take many years of protest, and a final breach of the Treaty of Versailles in dealing with this problem.

This heinous man called Hitler with his glib tongue, shouted and shrieked his way into the hearts and minds of the German people. He became the rabble-rouser and political leader of his time, and the head of the Worker's Party. He gave the party flags, uniforms, and an emblem - the black swastika on a white background of a bloody-red field. In his dealings with his own nation, and later lands which his armies occupied, he was first and foremost responsible for committing the most heinous atrocities in Modern Times.

Hitler used racial anti-Semitism as a pretext to galvanize "das Volk" - the German people - into aggressive actions. He ingratiated himself into the confidence of the malleable populace which were easily persuaded to follow him through thick and thin. While his movement started out as a small party, it soon became en masse, which he could easily motivate as he saw fit.

With his fiery speeches, this megalomaniac, believed that he and his party could lead the people out of a long existing depression, and unify the country. The youth of Germany were very smitten by his stormy rhetoric, and the older generation, some of whom were already anti-Semitic, believed and assisted him with his grand schemes. And as for the Jews they were exposed to the venom he spewed forth.

Jewish folks, like Beate's father, paid little or no attention to the new politics of the day. They thought Hitler wouldn't last for long. However, in January 1933, this loathsome figure was appointed Chancellor of Germany. A new era began when Hitler and his cronies started issuing a series of strict laws; the infamous Nuremberg decrees, against the Jews. From that moment forward, times were deeply troubling for the Jewish people, and the world would never be the same again.

The rhetorical and physical persecution of Jews began in the mid-1930s. In Hitler's warped mind, the greatest barrier to German unity was what he called "the Jewish Problem." Hitler claimed that even if the Jews had lived in Germany for generations, spoke German, had contributed to German culture, and had died for Germany in wars, they were not and could never be German because they were of another race.

As soon as the hate machinery was in high gear, uniformed mobs went about forcibly entering Jewish homes and jostling their occupants to be rounded up for deportation to various labor camps. It started out as a clandestine operation in the dead of night. The victims went quietly without any resistance, while their neighbors were fast asleep and unaware of what was happening. However, as the roundups became more habitual in 1942-43, they were conducted openly, and the killing of Jews took priority over the war effort (Germany against the Allies). As the Jews became deliberately overworked and useless to their taskmasters in the labor camps, they were deported to concentration camps – places of strict confinement, starvation, and death. It was a ruthless time for innocent people to be carried away with dispatch and done away with.

While the Jews were successfully made the scapegoat of what ailed Germany and considered subhuman, thereby a threat to the population at large, as advertised by a strong propaganda machine, thugs took over the country. In broad daylight, street mobs of uniformed men and boys, called the SA Sturmabteilung – stormtroopers shattered store-windows, and shouted:

"Juden raus!" "Jews out!"

Rampant violence, sanctioned by the Nazi Government and the State, was ubiquitous. Jews were increasingly targeted. A huge pogrom - a highly organized attack on the Jews was aimed at most synagogues and Jewish establishments throughout Germany with destruction beyond repair. Such was the tenor of the time, and Beate and her family lived among the chaos. It was a period of ferment and fervor, ripe for the unleashing of a strong anti-Semitism movement.

For months, Jewish citizens lived in fear, and were shocked and stunned at such actions. The Nazi regime's campaign against the Jews went on unchecked. The majority of Jews of 'modern Germany' had always thought that they were fully protected and equal to any other "Landsmann" – fellow countryman . Their people had made tremendous contributions to the development of the arts, sciences and commerce, which had established Germany as a major European nation. Instead, Hitler's genocidal attack on the Jews became the work of an entire highly civilized society.

While the Jews were suffering terrible indignities at the hands of a criminal element, the outside world failed to hear their cry for help. This terrible tragedy happened during the years 1933-1945, which later became known as the Holocaust or (Shoah in Hebrew), claiming six million Jewish lives.

As time wore on, the social climate in the country became increasingly volatile, and the hatred for the Jews was nonstop. Beate's father was reluctant to give up his home, business and everything for which he had worked so hard.

The father owned a small textile firm with a secretary and a showroom. Young Beate was always very excited whenever she visited his office. She would sit at the typewriter pretending to be working in the office. The colorful bolts of material neatly stacked on long shelves fascinated her because they were the source of all the pretty dresses her mother had always made for her. The father would set up some snacks for her in the nearby show-room which was furnished with a large table on which the material was shown to potential buyers and cut to order for them.

No one could conceive of what was to come. But by the end of 1938, Herr Hitler's ascent to power was firmly established, and had a very disastrous effect on the Jewish population. Beate and her family found themselves in growing peril. The number of their friends and relatives was dwindling without anyone ever leaving a forwarding address.

The father had the difficult task ahead of him of finding a safe haven for his family. He took this responsibility very seriously, and knew that it would be a race for time. Planning a route of escaping the Nazi terror, and selecting the quickest and most economical

way out meant hard work and dedication. It called for extraordinary determination, and courage on the part of the parents. Each step of the way of leaving their homeland was fraught with monumental difficulties. But instead of giving into dashed hopes at times, the father never hesitated in his quest. As a result, in the fall of 1940 Beate and her family were ready to take their journey.

In the beginning, a feverish campaign of letter-writing began. With a flying hand, the father wrote letters far and wide, searching for a possible sponsors to help with the emigration process. A desperate struggle got under way to get out of the country as soon as possible. The family's attempt to do so almost reached a point of futility, when at the eleventh hour, a distant American relative threw a life-belt, and thereby rescued them from the certainty of death. Fortunately, Beate's family were never in any great danger of becoming concentration camp victims. With much luck and hard work on the part of the father and the Jewish Aid Society, they survived their ordeal.

Up to the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Hitler welcomed the mass emigration of some 200,000 Jews, of which 80,000 were from Berlin alone. Of the remaining families, as in Beate's case, it took until the fall of 1940 for all the paper work and itinerary to be finalized, in order for the family to exit Berlin on one of the last regularly scheduled trains out of Berlin.

Ultimately, the Nazi regime decided on what it called the "Final Solution," which meant the mass murder of Jews in a proliferation of concentration camps such as Auschwitz, Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen, Dachau, and many others. To have survived these horrible camps was little short of a miracle

TROUBLE IN THE EAST

More political problems erupted around the world. The Russian-controlled Chinese Eastern Railroad crossed Manchuria from west to east and the Japanese-controlled South Manchurian Railroad (SMR) from south to north. On July 10, 1929, the Chinese seized the Eastern Railroad from the Russians. The family will get

a chance to ride this particular railroad on their brief sojourn through the area. As a result of this conflict over the railway, the USSR – Russia, broke diplomatic relations with China. First, there was an agreement not to start a war, but in August Russia's warships raided Manchuria. During the next month skirmishes were reported along the Siberian frontier. In the fall of 1940, Beate and her family will be in the vicinity making their border crossing on the Trans-Siberian Railroad at the city of Irkutsk.

In 1930, Japan sent its troops to take over the Manchurian capital city of Mukden, headquarters of the railway. This was another city the family would bypass during their trip. The Japanese retaliated for an alleged attempt by the Chinese to destroy a nearby bridge on route to the Japanese-owned Manchurian Railway.

In January of 1932, Japanese occupation forces in Manchuria set up the puppet Government of Manchukuo. However, in February, Manchuria's independence was declared. Again, Beate's trip would traverse Manchuria as part of her land tour.

Then came the rise to power of two strong-minded individuals. Hitler became the Nazi candidate for President, while a month later, on March 9, 1932, China's Emperor Pu Yi, who had abdicated in 1912, was installed as President of Manchukuo.

TROUBLE IN THE WEST

Back in Germany, in 1930 the Jewish burghers of Berlin watched anxiously the completion of a neighborhood temple, the Prinzregentenstrasse Synagogue, which the family joined as soon as its doors opened. When Beate and her brother were of school-age , they walked to the temple by themselves on Sunday mornings to take their religious instructions.

Upon taking power in 1933, the Nazis immediately began to rid Germany of its Jewish population. The first big wave of arrests of Jews began, as well as, the terminating of all fundamental rights and privileges for Jews. This included censorship of mail and house searches.

On March 10, 1 933, a new cultural policy found its expression in the burning of non-German literature at the Opern Platz – Berlin Opera. Approximately 20,000 books, among them the works of such giants as Mann and Freud, were publicly burned.

On March 28, 1933, the demon, Heinrich Himmler, Nazi Commissioner of Police, developed a new form of perversion with the design of the gas chambers for the mass killing of Jews.

On April 1, 1933, the SA Sturmabteilung – stormtroopers, organized boycotts of Jewish owned stores All store-fronts were painted with swastikas, the Star of David, and slogans such as:

"Kauf Nicht Bei Juden"
"Don't Buy From Jews"

Again on May 10, 1933, a huge bonfire illuminated a square in front of the Berlin University. Books by Jewish authors, including religious scrolls, and any literature which contents were "un-German," were eaten up by high rising flames. The Jews kept their distance, tragically looking on and thinking to themselves, "today our books, perhaps tomorrow they will burn us alive." Those were truly critical times; the beginning of the end for Jews and their legacy.

Following the death of Hindenburg – second President of the German Republic(1925-1934), Hitler elevated himself to the position of "Fuehrer," – leader, of what he claimed to be a "Thousand Year Reich" – Thousand Year Empire.

In May of 1934, new Jewish professionals were denied their licenses. In the summer of that year, signs went up all over the country proclaiming that Jews were no longer welcome in stores, restaurants, museums, theatres; and in all places of entertainment and culture. This was very difficult for Beate to accept. She loved the movies more than anything else. Furthermore, Jews were allowed the hour of four to five for their rationed daily food shopping. The kind shop-keepers, who knew the family well, whispered into the mother's ear to send Beate at any time of the day, because she looked non-Jewish with her blue eyes and small nose. They wanted to give her some extra food as a gesture of their true feelings toward the family.

In the summer of 1935, signs were seen in front of stores and restaurants, with the message:

"Juden unerwuenscht"

"Jews unwelcome"

Hitler also announced that he would no longer pay any attention to the arms limitations of the Versailles Treaty.

At the same time, Hitler signed into law the infamous Nurnberger Laws which consisted of a series of acts designed to further isolate and denigrate the Jews. For example the laws stipulated:

Marriages between Jews and those persons belonging to the Aryan race were "verboten" – forbidden.

Jews were no longer allowed to hire German women under the age of 46 years for domestic work. The family took this latest law very much to heart. It meant that they would have to dismiss their devoted nanny for all time. What would they do without her love and efficient help?

On November 14, 1935, Jews could no longer be citizens of Germany, and were made stateless. All Jewish civil servants were dismissed. Life was made increasingly difficult for the Jewish population..

In 1936, Hitler marched his troops into the Rhineland. And later into Austria, where the Austrian Nazi Party welcomed them with open arms.

Many more German occupations took place. In 1939 Hitler invaded Poland, and in summer of 1940 the German army marched through the Arch of Triumph in Paris while the besieged city fell to the powerful German forces. More and more Jewish families could no longer live under such dire conditions, and took flight in immigration.

CHAPTER II

A SLICE OF LIFE.

What is so unique about Beate and her family? Well for one thing, she was born and raised, up to her eleventh year, in the capital city of Berlin, Germany. Before WWII Berlin was a beautiful city. It was a city which sprang out of a provincial backwater, and later became the seat of the Prussian Court. In modern times, it turned out to be one of the most fashionable and cosmopolitan cities of Europe. However, after the National Socialists Movement took over the country in the early 1930s, everything that was good and noble ended. Great upheavals ensued, and the country became involved in the Second World War..

In spite of the many happy events which took place in those critical years of growing up, there were just as many unhappy moments to cope with. Beate had a brother a year older than herself. He had his mother's dark features and good looks, but was as different from Beate as night and day. He showed no interest in making friends with boys his own age, instead preferred the company of older people. It was his habit of provoking Beate into physical fights, but because of her gymnastic superiority, she was able to fend him off. This strange behavior showed early on, and continued into adult life. It was a well kept secret, that the brother had very little affection for his younger sister. Why this situation went unchecked by the parents, was something Beate could never understand. She simply stayed out of his way and tried to ignore him. She always had her own circle of girlfriends to distract her, and make life enjoyable.

The children were cared for by a wonderful, loving nanny named Otti. The nanny was hired when Beate was born. She took excellent care of the children, as though they were her own. She had a friendly and pleasing disposition. From the time the children were babies, she took them for walks in the fresh air to a nearby

city park called "Hohenzollern Platz," –named after the ruling Prussian family (1701-1918) founded by Frederick I.. The Hohenzollern family ruled Berlin for over 500 years. The accomplishments of this family in the seventeenth and eighteenth century had improved Berlin beyond recognition. The park was one of their gifts to the city. It was laid out with beautiful walkways and appointed with well-kept lawns, a playground for small children, and lots of benches. Beate and her brother loved to be taken to this play area.

Occasionally, the mother took the children for an afternoon stroll through the park, and a visit to the nearby ice-cream parlor for a special treat. Those were some of the more intimate moments the children shared with their mother. On the weekend, the children were taken by their parents to the famous Tiergarten – public city park, and the adjoining famous Berlin Zoo.

The mother was always well dressed according to her social standing in the community. She was a stunning-looking woman, with a dark complexion. She had the features of an Italian beauty with her brown hair and eyes to match. Beate's mother was born in Frankfurt, which was quite evident by the dialect in which she spoke. Her nature was quiet and dignified combined with a good sense of humor. She had a pleasing personality, and was well liked.

Having been a spinster, who kept house for her widowed mother (the father had died the same week she was born), she naturally married late in life after her mother had died. She was a meticulous homemaker, outstanding cook and baker. According to the family's finances, she had the perfect opportunity to pursue social contact, but she preferred to busy herself in the home with sewing and the preparation of meals.

As for the father, Beate felt that he gave the impression of being aloof, and not very affectionate toward the family. He was ten years older than the mother, and into his second marriage. He looked very dignified, and Beate was always proud to be seen walking with him. She highly respected his privacy, but always wished that he would be more forthcoming with her. For the most part she had little to fear from him, because she was always a well-behaved child. Her brother was something else, he often ran

around the table with the father chasing him with his belt in hand. As Beate grew older and more mature, she began to understand her father better, and no longer question his demeanor. She realized that he loved his family, as shown by his tireless efforts to stay together during the long emigration process, and subsequently, carve out a living in the United States.

The beloved nanny had her very own little room in the family's apartment. Beate loved to visit with the young woman trying on jewelry, paint her fingernails, and listen to stories Ottie would tell and read to her. During summer school vacations, Beate was often taken along to Otti's home on a farm in Koenigsberg. Those were immeasurably fun days for a city dweller like Beate. She learned all about farm life as she watched carefully the farm-hands work the land. She would happily get up early in the morning to be ready to feed the small farm animals; which was her special duty. At mealtimes she joined everybody at a long table in the main room of the farmhouse to part-take in some of the best and tastiest meals she ever ate. The heavy slices of dark bread spread with sweet butter tasted so good to her. When she returned home, her family were glad to see her looking so healthy and taller by a couple of inches from all the good food and fresh country air.

Besides the dear nanny, there was the stout laundry woman. She was steadily employed on the first day of every month to do the family's wash. She was a loving and caring friend, who just adored the children because she had no family of her own.. Her work took up much of the day in the wash-room located in the attic of the building. She would be bend over steaming, hot vessels scrubbing and rubbing on boards or with her bare hands until everything looked snowy-white. The following morning she would return and finish her job by removing the laundry from the lines, strung up under the open roof, and then spend the rest of the day ironing, until every single handkerchief was neatly folded and put back in its place.

Whenever the kind old woman came to do her work she would arrive early in the morning with a bag full of freshly baked rolls from the corner bakery. Beate's mother and the children would have her sit down with them at the breakfast table in the big

kitchen for some hot cocoa and spoonfuls of honey or jam on the still warm rolls. Then the children went off to school with a good, hearty breakfast under their belt, and a kiss from the friendly laundress.

Beate loved the dear woman who had, over the many years, become part of the family. Not only did she work in Beate's home, but also in the homes of relatives. She was a gem of a person, and loyal and honest to a fault.

Both domestics were dearly loved and respected by all. To never see them again, because of a ridiculous mandate issued by Hitler to keep the races pure, was a great loss for everyone. However, the long years of devoted service broke all barriers. The women still came surreptitiously to visit and to help out with minor tasks. But most of all, they came to console the mother who was struggling with the anxiety of what is to become of the family.

When the women's visits became fewer and fewer, they were terribly missed. Their final parting was met with a deep-felt regret and an uncontrollable outburst of tears.

One of the most poignant events in young Beate's life was the day the nanny took her final leave of the family. It was early evening and a taxi was waiting for her outside the building. Otti had just finished packing and was inching her way to the door, with the family clinging onto her. She was literally being torn apart by the people who dearly loved her. Parting company with their beloved nanny caused much anguish; it felt like a knife going through their hearts. Eventually the nanny freed herself from the children's clambering, and made a quick stealthy exit down the stairs, in hopes of not running into any Nazi-sympathizing neighbor seeing her leave the apartment of a Jewish family.

It was heart-breaking for the family to follow the nanny fade into the night. Just before getting into the taxi, she turned around one more time with tears streaming down her sad face to look at the family as they stood gathered around the upstairs window. She blew them kisses and waved her gloved hand with a final "Aufwiedersehen" – good-bye. Only this time it was not see you again, but 'thanks for the memory, this is the end of a loving friendship."

BEATE'S CHILDHOOD

Before a vast transformation came over Germany in the early 1930s, caused by the nation's take-over by a ruthless leader, Beate and her folks had enjoyed a comfortable life. The family were of Western European origin, and it is common knowledge that Jews from this area were more likely to have been "irreligious" than their Eastern brothers. Raised in a conservative Jewish home, the family were not particularly observant, but attended the holiday services in their temple with regularity. Beate had very little Jewish education which came to an end with Kristallnacht in 1938. When it was still possible for Jews to practice their religion in relative freedom, Beate remembers the observance of the holidays with special family meals. Grandma Lena and aunts and uncles sat around the lavishly-set holiday table while uncle Dago officiated the services in Hebrew.

The father had his small business, and the mother supervised the household. The children were under the care of a young nanny. During the early, carefree days, there were the usual seasonable comforts of life. Every summer the family occupied a small villa which was located on the outskirts of the city. The children sometimes had the opportunity to spend a couple of weeks in summer-camp at the seashore. Occasionally, the whole family took a week's vacation in the Harz Mountains. This was the life-style of a typical bourgeoisie Jewish family living in Berlin, Germany before a new order took over the country.

Beate was always thrilled to be spending time at the small villa, which actually belonged to the father's friend, who spent his summers in Switzerland. The small stone house with its beautiful garden of fruit trees and thick vegetation, had enough bedrooms to accommodate extra company such as Beate's girl cousins and grandmother.

Beate's grandmother was called "Omi." She was a tiny heavy-set woman . Her appearance was very motherly with a head of white hair braided in the back of her head. In general, she had a sort of Victorian look about her. Her clothes were very simple and old-fashioned. She always wore black dresses reaching down to

her toes. Her nature was that of a kind, old woman, who was greatly indulging towards her grandchildren. Every time she came to visit the family, from her own small apartment a few bus stops away, she would shower the children with chocolate coins wrapped in gold paper, which they eagerly awaited and collected from her pudgy little hands.

There was definitely something different about the grandmother's language. She spoke German with a pronounced foreign accent. The children sometimes could not understand her, and when they asked their parents for an explanation, they were told that all grandmas spoke in that fashion. It was her habit of smoking awful smelling cigars in the house. This practice was for medicinal purposes due to her asthma condition.

Beate often watched her mother and the nanny preserve fruit from the pickings in the garden. The canning work was done in the cool basement of the villa. It required great care and effort in cooking, cooling, and filling glass jars, and properly sealing them. During the winter months it was always a delight to spread those wonderful homemade jams on the crispy, hard breakfast rolls.

Beate's childhood was well defined. She had an amicable playmate who lived in the same building. The two girls had met in class on the very first day of school, and became inseparable companions thereafter. Beate will always remember her initiation into school as depicted on a rare photograph. She captured the beginning of her education by posing in front of her home, holding up a huge cone-shaped paper container, which is customary with all school children, filled with all sorts of sweets, symbolizing the sweetness which is to follow throughout the school years.
Her friend Dorothea, nicknamed Dorle, was of the Lutheran religion, which made no difference to the two friends. Beate had a rather quiet, bashful personality, whereas in contrast Dorle, was a lively, dainty little girl, and great fun to be with. The two girls were like two peas in a pot.

While growing up, the children's favorite past-time was playing "house," with their many dolls and doll carriages. Beate would receive a new doll for every birthday. The children were left pretty much on their own to entertain themselves for hours at a

time. They played mostly in Dorle's garden apartment because she had a backyard, with a swing, and lots of space for pushing their doll carriages. On warm weather days, after school when the girls were older and more responsible they were permitted to take a distant walk to a garden area, where Dorle's auntie owned a piece of land with fruit trees, flower beds, and plenty of earth for planting vegetables. The girls would take an empty doll carriage, sandwiches from home, and happily push their carriage through familiar neighborhoods, singing and nearly tipping the carriage over in their joyful outing of the day. At the garden they picnicked in a small wooden cabin, and then got to work on their hands and knees with puttering in the dirt and watching their vegetables grow. Each one had her own plot of land for growing beans, cucumbers, carrots and radishes which they carefully cultivated. At the end of their day's gardening, they would fill up the doll carriage with all the ripened produce they could carry, add some flowers as gifts for their mothers, before returning home. Beate's mother was always very fond of the lilac branches brought back from the garden. She would arrange them in the beautiful crystal vases kept in the elegant dining room, and let their fragrance permeate throughout the apartment. Dorle's aunt was glad to have the little girls help her tend her garden, and to enjoy some of the fruits of their labor.

On other occasions the two friends rolled marbles, and jumped hopscotch and rope on the sidewalk in front of their building. For indoor activities, the girls amused themselves with collecting photos of their favorite film stars. Each girl had a great many glossy pictures which they admired and traded with their friends at school. At other times the children chose Dorle's beautiful, formal dining room set with its heavy chairs for their gymnastic exercises. The heavy chairs served as their equipment, and were used for athletic performances staged with a curtain and props for the benefit of an audience made up of friends and families.

These sturdy dining-room chairs, placed side by side, made perfect parallel bars for the girls to swing on and demonstrate their physical skills. In those early years Beate showed real athletic

prowess, and a desire to want to pursue a career in physical education.

The handsome, heavily ornamental set of furniture was a wedding gift to Dorle's parents from her grandfather. Unbeknown to the newly weds at the time, this unusual set of furniture came to a sorrowful end during the harsh war years, which ended in 1945. Dorle's parents had to bear humbly their pride and joy when their beautiful dining room set was put up for sale only to be chopped to pieces to be used for firewood, and a source of income for paying the monthly rent, or else Dorle's family would surely be made homeless.

There are some interesting facts of history associated with Dorle's grandfather. He was a famous German seascape painter, and therefore, could well afford to make such a grandiose present to his daughter. His name was Carl Louis Herman Gustave Salzman. A name to reckon with. He was the sixth child of a master shoemaker, born in 1847 in Berlin. In 1866 he passed his exam as a goldsmith artisan. His heartfelt desire was to become a student at the Arts Academy in Berlin. There he studied for three more years. His studies took him to many European countries. Later he set himself up in a studio in Berlin. While the German crown princess at that time, was attending an exhibit of his and bought a painting, she wished to make the artist's acquaintance. After an audience with the princess, the young artist got an invitation to be a travel companion, and art teacher to Prince Heinrich of Prussia, and his brother Prince Wilhelm (later Wilhelm II). In 1888, Dorle's grandfather traveled extensively with Kaiser – King Wilhelm II (1871-1918), and the two had formed a binding friendship with each other which lasted over many years.

Dorle was very proud of her ancestral achievements. She once told Beate an amusing anecdote concerning her grandfather. It happened while he was in royal company. He had changed his style of eating, since he could not answer his Royal Highness with a full mouth of food. For that reason he decided that in order to appease protocol and his hunger, that he should cut his food into very small pieces to be swallowed quickly. This original eating habit was passed on to future generations. Whenever, Beate came

to join Dorle's family for afternoon tea, she was served what was referred to as " Kleine Reiterchen, " - hors d'oeuvres.

For further entertainment, the friends would often walk a few blocks from home to the neighborhood "Kino" – cinema. There they would sit through a couple of Shirley Temple pictures much to their delight. The little Hollywood dimpled doll with a mop of ringlets was their beloved movie idol. Her films were imported from America and the voices dubbed in German for the benefit of Shirley's adoring young audiences.

As Beate looked back on her childhood, she was convinced that the biggest plus was her friendship with little Dorle, as she was affectionately called by everyone. Dorle and Beate shared all the joys and sorrows of growing up. Dorle's parents considered Beate a good friend for their daughter, and always welcomed her into their home, playing in their garden, joining the family for afternoon tea, and for the holidays. Some of Beate's fondest childhood memories are the visits made to the Schuzius family at Christmas-time. There was always the traditional "Tannenbaum " – evergreen tree almost touching the ceiling, and trimmed to perfection, with lots of presents tugged underneath it for friends and family. Dorle's family had an entirely different life-style as compared to Beate's experience. For one thing, her parents were intensely close, whereas Beate's parents were more reserved, and did not openly show their affection for each other. Every night Dorle's parents took their after-dinner "Spaziergang" - stroll around the block arm in arm. They considered everything collectively, and never spoke a cross word. Their social behavior was a great role model for Beate to follow in her adult life.

But the good old days, and the wonderful carefree times that went with them, suddenly came to a sad end. The years that followed were filled with devastating breakdowns in the social, political, and economic fabric of Europe and Asia. These two regional conflicts would eventually merge into a single global struggle resulting in a new world war.

Although Beate did not realize it at the time, her close friendship with Dorle would soon have to be terminated because all Jews had to abide by the new dictates of the national

government. Whoever criticized or opposed the current system were imprisoned.

Dorle was not Beate's only friend. There were additional Jewish classmates, but their relationships were less intimate. This group of friends invited each other to birthday parties and outings, and saw one another at school. But with Dorle it was quite different. Beate willingly shared everything with her, and neither of them ever felt envy for the other. As the times changed, the little girls did not see as much of each other as they would have liked, and eventually their wonderful friendship was torn apart while the Nazi drama played itself out. In the golden years of their lives, nearly sixty years later, the two devoted friends were able to re-establish the bond. With their reunion they began to value their friendship even more, and realize how rare it is to have a good friend for such a long duration.

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CHAPTER III

A NEW WORLD ORDER

The trouble in the East arose from the slow disintegration of the ancient Chinese Empire, and the ambition of a dynamic new power, which was Japan, to move into the resulting vacuum.

In the West, in Germany particularly, the nights were filled with fear and terror. Men were being arrested for no other reason than for being Jews. Other groups such as gypsies, the infirm, homosexuals were also targeted. These unfortunate victims were delivered to a waiting station in the city, and when enough victims were collected to fill a cattle-train, they were transported to the abominable concentration camps. Not many survived the hardships of imprisonment, and subsequently became victims to the gas chambers, where six million died.

Their brave women-folk, came after them to the Detention Centers, beseeching the authorities to let them go for the sake of their children. Not the most heart-rendering pleading could turn their fate around. What did those unfortunate Jews do to be hated so much? They went quietly without putting up any resistance; and nobody stood up for them! They were ultimately doomed to a tragic fate! Such terrible loss of lives!

The end for Jews living in Germany was imminent. The time for leaving the country, was now or never. The family's existence was much at risk. At any moment, they could be faced with deportation. Beate's father instructed the children, in the event the Gestapo – Geheime Staatspolizei - secret State Police, organized in 1933 under the Nazi regime to operate against political opposition, came knocking on their door, to say that their father was out of town visiting a sick relative. Then every night he would leave the apartment after supper for an undisclosed location, and disappear into the night. Later it was discovered that all this time he had been hiding out in a vacant store nearby. The next morning the family were glad to have him back. They would always stay together, as long as it was possible to do so. During those dangerous times,

many families split up, and send their children ahead of them in Kinder Landverschickung – evacuation of young children to safe foreign countries, such as France, America, and Great Britain. Unfortunately, many of these brave children never saw their parents again as the older members of the family succumbed to the Holocaust. But Beate's father held on to the belief that there was a greater chance of leaving the country by staying together.

What was happening to the German Jewry was no secret, it was known to people of great power; but the world chose to ignore the pleadings of the desperate masses. Only a few "good people," exercised their conscience and came to the aid of some lucky Jews. Thus many good people perished under the most powerful, systematic mass killing machine which came out of the Twentieth Century.

Hitler was not satisfied with just getting rid of the Jews. His grandiose plan was for a "Third Reich" - Fascist State, which meant an expansion of his country's territory at the expense of other nations. His goal was to attain "Weltmacht" – world power.

After the 1938 occupations of the Rhineland and Austria, the Jews in Berlin where not permitted access to a specified perimeter in the central part of the city, which included the beautiful broad tree-lined boulevard called "Unter Den Linden " – Avenue of the lime trees, where Berliners loved to take their weekend strolls. This restriction presented a problem for Beate's father, who had continuous dealings with the American Consulate located in the same vicinity. Nevertheless, the father continued with his unabated efforts until all required conditions were met and the family's plan of escape came to fruition.

≺ CHAPTER IV ≻

BEATE'S LIFESTYLE

Young Beate was very naïve and not fully aware of the grave aspects of the times. She and her friend Dorle would often stand exhilarated by the curbside to watch the many uniformed flag carriers marching in endless processions through their neighborhood streets. Like most children she loved to watch a parade. In fact, at one time, she and her girlfriend made a special effort to reach a section of the city, which was considered a famous route for receiving dignitaries. It was September, 1937, when the "Duce" - Bonito Mussolini (1883-1945) Italian dictator, visited Hitler. The Nazis put on a great display to welcome him. Bunting and flags decorated the gray buildings and boulevards everywhere. The light-hearted public held flowers and waved little flags along the route of the pair's triumphal ride. Thousands of people had flocked to the city center, pushing for a good vantage point, and jostling along the well guarded parade route to get a good look at their heroes. Later, Mussolini spoke at a rally in German which earned him a thunderous applause from the zealous crowd. He said that his country's Fascism and Nazism were two forms of the same phenomenon. Both leaders had formed a coalition in 1935 and called it the Rome-Berlin Axis which later added Japan to fight against the Allies.

Beate and Dorle had managed to find a good viewing post, which was right in front of a long and deep line of spectators who were being held back by the SA - Storm-troopers from running up to the convertible limousine which was slowly passing the cheering crowd. Beate could clearly see the pair of diabolical leaders as they stood up in the black shiny car with outstretched arms giving the Nazi salute to a crowd of crazed people.

When later she told her mother whom she had seen that morning, the mother hoped that she did not give those two bandits the "heil." She also gave a warning to Beate to be extra careful on

the street, even though she could easily be taken for a non-Jew with her Germanic features.

Before living conditions for the Jews in Germany had deteriorated, the district of Wilmersdorf in the city of Berlin, was an ideal place to grow up in. Upright citizens lived in this particular area which was developed into attractively designed buildings during the industrialization of the country, and had very little industry. In a few decades Berlin had grown from a provincial city into the most powerful capital on the continent. In 1929, Berlin was at the top in its field of technical development. The "S-bahn" – electrical speed train, or subway, was built in a circle around the city connecting with the outskirts of the town.

Beate celebrated exciting birthday parties to which she invited many of her class-mates, and of course, her best friend Dorle. There was always the beautifully set table in the formal dining room with party decorations, favors and prizes at each seating. The room itself had handsome décor, such as light, silk covered walls, which were hung with large, gold framed still-life paintings. A stylish massive oak china-closet stood against the widest wall of the room. Against a smaller wall stood a matching credenza, displaying the family's beautiful pieces of Bavarian crystal, which were the mother's pride and joy, Fortunately, much of the fine glassware was salvaged by means of a small transport of household items shipped separately to America before the family's exodus from Berlin. The china-closet also displayed the expensive porcelain and chinaware the family had accumulated over the years. The most treasured heirloom was a precious Bavarian Rosenthal china set with the dark blue and gold rim, used mainly on the Jewish holidays and other special occasions.

The front entrance of the apartment featured a small foyer, furnished with a light green table and chairs, a matching wall mirror and umbrella stand. Beate always loved this set of attractive furniture, and had told her mother, that she wished to use it in her own redecorated room when she became a teenager.

Most of the floors in the apartment were covered with thick Oriental carpets. Beate enjoyed playing a game of marbles on them. There was a front room called "Herrenzimmer" – Men's

Smocking Room, which served as a family room, where everybody sat listening to the radio or gramophone - phonograph in the evenings. The dark brown leather couch and matching chairs made the room seem very warm and pleasant. A large oak desk stood in one corner, and a glass enclosed bookcase completed the furnishings of this comfortable room.

Extending from the family room was a small balcony facing the street. Weather permitting, the family took their afternoon tea beside a row of potted geraniums. The children loved to stand out on the balcony to greet their cousins as they arrived by car for a weekend visit.

On New Year's Eve, the children and their cousins would sit on the leather couch, and for hours work colored paper streamers into all sorts of configurations to be thrown over the sides of the balcony at the stroke of midnight.

Next to the family room was a huge guest room, which was furnished with a convertible bed, wooden closet, round table and comfortable chairs, and lots of Persian rugs and paintings. This room was mainly used by the grandmother on her weekend visits, which started with Friday afternoon. She was the only observant Jew in the whole family, who would not ride the bus on the Sabbath day. Included in the furnishings of the room was a beautiful black grand piano. It stood in front of row of curved windows which caught the morning sun. To Beate's great regret later on in life, it had a very short history of usage. The children were introduced to it with the help of a friendly music teacher, when they were very young, and the family's finances were still in good shape. However, there was no awakening of any interest in either of the children, and therefore, lessons were disbanded. The beautiful piano just got an occasional dusting, and became a prominent display item in the seldom-used guest- room.

For a whiff of fresh air and a touch of green grass, the family enjoyed outings to their favorite park and lakes. On those happy pleasure trips Beate's mother would prepare a picnic basket, and the family take the convenient "U-Bahn" – elevated train, to the end of the line at "Grunewald" – Green Forest. Underneath orchards and wide-open trimmed lawns, the family would find a

spot with picnic tables and benches to spend the day. There were several small lakes and the River Havel, where families made weekend excursion trips to be " raus in der frische Luft" – out in the fresh air.

The children both attended a neighborhood public school. On Sundays they pursued their religious training at the nearby synagogue until the infamous event, which closed the temple doors for all time.

HARD TIMES AHEAD

The temple closing occurred as the result of an expression of personal hatred against the Germans by a particular young man. During the night of November 9-10, 1938, synagogues throughout Germany were destroyed by fire. This act of mass vandalism was a reaction to the assassination of a German diplomat by a young Jew in Paris, France. The burning of the temples was orchestrated by the Propaganda Minister, Goebbels.

On the morning after this contemptible incident, Beate and her brother unknowingly of what had happened during the night, set out for their usual weekly religious classes. They found their temple surrounded by smoke and razed by fire. As they returned home, the mother, who happened to be standing by the window facing the court-yard, saw them running home in great excitement. She naturally became alarmed and called down to them, but Beate's brother put her off. The brother was a very precocious child. He looked up at his mother and quickly placed a finger on his lips, to motion for her to be quiet and patient. When the children were safe within the walls of their own apartment, the boy gasped out what he had seen. The temple was completely charred; and the teacher all choked up, as he instructed his students to quickly turn around and stay behind closed doors. The children ran home as fast as they could to unburden their load of horrifying news, and to sort out and comprehend the meaning of what they had just witnessed. They were still in a state of disbelief after they had delivered the shocking news to their shaken mother.

This tragic incident was part of a planned pogrom, given the name of "Kristallnacht" - Crystal Night by Jews around the world. It included the deportation and assaulting of Jews wherever they could be found. Almost all of the synagogues in Germany were destroyed, their beautiful stained glass windows shattered, and the alters plundered by street gangs. Jewish shops everywhere suffered the same assault.

The year 1938, was indeed very unsettling for the Jews of Germany. Association with people other than Jews was strictly "verboten" – forbidden. In August of the same year, many arrests were made. Any non-Jew found helping Jews was arrested and treated brutally. Those Jews who were seen merely talking to Aryan women, could find themselves incarcerated. And those who dissented from the official line of edicts could expect to be hauled off to prison.

Starting with April 26, 1938, all Jews had to report their total financial status.

July 25, 1938, Jewish doctors could only treat Jewish patients, and their professional title was changed to "Krankenhandler" - dealers of sickness.

August 17, 1938, Jews had to adopt an added middle name. All females were given the name of Sara, and males added the name of Israel.

September 27, 1938, Jewish lawyers could no longer practice their profession, except in cases involving Jews. Their professional title was changed to "Konsulenten" – Consultants.

October 5, 1938, Passports issued to Jews were marked with a big, black letter "J" on the outside cover to further intimidate the Jew and for all the world to take notice.

November 28, 1938, Jews were forbidden access to or being seen in certain areas of the city, which were within the jurisdiction of the Government.

December 3, 1938, cars and driver's licenses belonging to Jews were confiscated.

December 6, 1938, entrance to theatres, cinema, opera, museums, and sports facilities were denied to all Jews.

December 8, 1938, Jews had to leave schools and German universities.

The next year on February 21, 1939, all jewelry owned by Jews had to be turned over to the State and left with the neighborhood Police stationhouse. Only wedding rings were excluded. Beate in her childish mind was crushed. There was a particular turquoise ring in her mother's jewelry box, which she greatly admired. She was hoping that some day her mother would part with it and give it to her. Now it was to be worn by a strange.. Beate felt terribly hurt and disappointed.

July 4, 1940, shopping for daily food supplies became a big problem. Jews were restricted to one hour in the afternoon, which was hardly enough time to search for food on the small amount of rations allotted to them. Some fortunate families were helped with a few added provisions by their friendly Aryan neighbors, while still others, who had money to spare, bought what they needed on the black market. The Jewish Social Service in most cities was always helpful to those who were in daily need of at least one hot meal.

SCHOOL DAYS

Beate took her last class field-trip in September of 1938. Leading the group of girls was the beloved teacher who had been with them from the first day of schooling. This tall, gangly person was Fraulein Klose. Beate liked her teacher from the beginning and until the very end of her four years of formal education. Fraulein Klose looked stern and unapproachable, but in reality she was a compassionate, kind soul. She wore thick glasses over her near-sighted eyes. Her dresses were buttoned up to the neck. All one could see were her white long fingers and a pale face surrounded by a head of hair of deep waves swept up on the sides and tied to the back of the head.

She taught some thirty little girls. The school had another wing to it where Beate's brother took his instructions. After lunch, which was brought from home and carried in a special leather case around the neck, the children were led out into the court-yard of

the building to march in a circle for their daily exercises. Beate often ran into her brother looking rather gloomy and somewhat in pain while holding his hands after having his knuckles rapped with a long ruler by a disciplining teacher.

The school was located on the Joachimsthalerstrasse, a few minutes walk from Beate's home. When the children were small, their nanny or their mother took them by the hand to drop them off at school. On the way they came to a busy intersection at a famous boulevard known for its many fine cafes. A city policeman was always stationed at the busy street corners, acting both as traffic facilitator, as well as school crossing guard. On many occasions these friendly and obliging police officers would stop to have pictures taken with the children and their parents. At the end of the year, for the holidays, the families would richly reward these kind escorts with cartons of cigarettes, boxes of cigars and bottles of liquor, to show their appreciation for hovering over their brood.

Now at a mature age, much of Beate's memories of happy school days have faded into oblivion. Only a few precious impressions surface from time to time; and a scant number of highly prized pictures remain to recapture a moment in time when a group of unsuspecting little girls dreamed of a bright future with plans of finishing school, going on to the Gymnasium - High School preparatory to attending University, graduating , and eventually getting married and raising a family of their own.

Up to the last day before Beate's expulsion from public school, the teacher tried her best to make the class-room environment as pleasant as possible, considering the circumstances under which they lived. She treated all her young pupils fairly no matter what religion they practiced. The children always felt relaxed in her presence, and were most eager to return the next day. They had a strong yearning to be with their peers, and away from their troubled parents. Fraulein Klose had a comforting way about her, which gave the children a sense of security, and hope for the Nazi nightmare to just go away. The time spent in class with their devoted teacher was the best and safest for the Jewish children. It was the only part of their daily routine that made any sense to them.

After Beate, her brother and all their Jewish friends left their public school, they were sent to a makeshift school. This temporary school was established by a Jewish teacher. It was called the "Hartwegsschule" after its founder and only teacher; and meaning very appropriately, the "hard way school." Children of all ages came together in one large room in the teacher's apartment. The Jewish parents were glad to have their children at school to continue with some type of education, even if it was only for half a day. It was not only an outlet for the children, but for the parents as well. They badly needed the peace and quiet at home to concentrate on their emigration efforts.

The fabricated school could accommodate all the eager neighborhood Jewish kids, but the well-meaning teacher could do no justice on her own to properly educate them. Therefore, she decided that the main subject of her classroom instructions should be the teaching of the English language. This would be a most meaningful and useful tool for the children's eventual immigration abroad.

Beate was a bashful and quite student, somewhat of a slow learner, but nevertheless, she loved school, especially gymnastics. After four years of basic elementary school, building a good foundation in her native tongue, followed by temporary classes of English, Beate's school days came to a halt. She was forced to postpone the completion of her education perhaps in America. With the end of regular school, and the prohibition of time spent with her dear friend, Berlin just didn't seem the same anymore for young Beate.

EMIGRATION PLANS

Toward the end of the 1930s, Hitler's unrelenting campaign against the Jews made emigrating so much more urgent for most Jewish families. The herding of innocent Jews to labor and concentration camps was rampant throughout the country and mainly carried out under cover of night. The disappearance of large number of friends and relatives, signaled a warning to many Jews that something was amiss. Beate's father was the eternal optimist. He was part of a camp of people in denial, and thought that the present incredibly discriminatory social behavior toward the Jews would pass. Eventually, reality set in, and the father realized that the family was vulnerable to the corruption of the government, and that he had better do something to protect the family. The father became obsessed with the idea of emigration. His constant motto was: *"God help us out of our situation, and find us a sponsor before it is too late!"*

Finding a willing sponsor in a foreign country was almost impossible. It required a deep search for any possible ties with friends or relatives, going back in the family's history who might have left the country one time or another. There was also, the problem of many countries around the world being reluctant to accept a horde of refugees, no matter who they were.

As a prelude to immigration certain procedures had to be followed. First and foremost, there was the matter of producing a document of Intent For Leaving Germany which had to be filed with the German authorities. Subsequently, the potential immigrant had to show a Certificate of Health and Personal Conduct. A bank account in the name of the refugee had to be set up in the country of entry by a potential sponsor. The size of the deposit was left up to the discretion of the host country. And lastly, an "Affidavit," was essential to the emigration process. This document was a sworn statement by the sponsor that he would assume all responsibilities of the immigrants once they had entered the new country. While the affidavit was the cornerstone of the emigration process, good health and endurance were just as important.

Another very important element of the process was the Quota System. Every country had a Quota System of its own, which referred to a specific number of immigrants allowed into that country. The legal number of immigrants allowed into the United States in 1938, was based on the old Quota Laws of 1921-24, which number was as low as 27,000. Furthermore, in order to gain legal entry into America, an endless number of documents had to be submitted to the American General Consulate in Berlin.

The required documents were as follows: Passport, Birth Certificate, Marriage Certificate, a sound Financial Statement for proof against any outstanding debts. Also, a Police Clearance, and other bureaucratic matters. And most important, the immigrant had to prove that he was paying for his own passage out of Germany. And then lo and behold one day, Beate's father seemed to have remembered his old friend Ben, who had left Berlin some years ago for Australia, and never heard from again. Through friends the father found his address and without fail wrote to him asking if he could find it in his heart to send them an affidavit?

For those Jews who could not locate a willing sponsor, and were in a haste to leave, there were some other options open to them. Their needs could be met by several countries which adhered to an open-door policy. Many Jews found no other way out than to exile in Latin America and the African countries. Others went for a tropical climate in Haiti, and its neighboring country of The Dominion Republic. Many refugees are known to have gone to Shanghai, China, which was an open city, and a magnet for many desperate Jews. Most of these countries served as transit points at which the refugees made their home, sometimes lasting a good many years, en route to their ultimate destination in the future. Still other desperate families with strong beliefs in the movement for the re-establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, found refuge in the land which in 1948 became known as the State of Israel.

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN.

On June 8, 1938, Beate's father put pen to paper and wrote his first S.O.S. letter seeking asylum outside Germany. He composed a

poignant plea to the friend who had left Germany as soon as German politics became muddied, and anti-Semitism was on the rise. The distress message to the Australian friend did not produce the desired result. The father was heart-broken in his first attempt to secure a safe haven for his family. He begged the family not to worry, and reassured them that he would try much harder, but they must be prepared for the worst.

News of the trial balloon and its negative outcome reached the ears of the father's sister and her husband li- ing in Lithuania. These relatives had great empathy with the family, especially for the children. They could not directly send help, but it was hinted that it might be possible to assist them through some connection in the United States.

News of the mistreatment of the Jews in Germany was well known to the relatives. The abuse had reached a point of widespread proportion and there appeared to be no slackening. It was impossible and right dangerous for the family to remain in their present milieu any longer. And then opportunely, the Lithuanian couple found a distantly related sponsor living far across the ocean in America, who became the catalyst of hope and finality to the family's far and wide search out of their dilemma. Beate's family were told by their aunt R that her husband M. had a step-sister living in New York. This brave, young woman had left her native Lithuanian village for America many years ago after her husband died. Together with her son she settled in Brooklyn, New York. What a lucky break for Beate and her family! It seemed almost like finding a needle in a haystack. Who would have thought that "Aunt Clara," would come to their rescue? As it turned out, she was the magnanimous person, in a long drawn-out emigration process who saved a small, frightened family. She moved heaven and earth to get her people out before any detriment could come to them.

Aunt Clara, was the undeniable heroine, who made the family's escape come true. Little did Beate know that she would soon be transported to another part of the world. However, there were still many problems ahead. The family were facing a race against time; and a complicated emigration process to deal with.

The American aunt was someone larger than life in Beate's eyes as she got to know her better through the heavy exchange of correspondence between the two families. However, in real life, as Beate was to learn later, aunt Clara was small in stature, but big in doing good deeds for those in need. The father always said of her: *"She has a big heart of gold!"*

Her personal history was quite sad. When she found herself in early widowhood in her native Lithuania, she decided to try her luck in America. She had read much about the New World and believed that she and her son would find more opportunities for a better life abroad. Her native homeland of Lithuania was not a stable country. It had a long history of political and economical upheavals, and was mired in constant land annexations by surrounding unfriendly nations.

At the discovery of aunt Clara's original birthplace, Beate learned that her own father was also a product of that small nation. There was never a word about it. Beate was taken completely by surprise. The father had left his own family as a young man, as so many other young courageous hopefuls did, to find their fortune in Germany or America. Once he had established himself in Berlin, he sent for the rest of the family in order to offer them a better life.

It was quite a revelation for Beate to be told that her own father was a 'foreigner.' She had never detected the slightest foreign accent in his speech. On the contrary, her father looked and spoke like all the rest of the fathers in her circle of friends.

It is a known fact, that in Europe, as well as other places, one's religion and place of birth are considered one's permanent 'nationality' even if the person has lived most of their life in another country.

Jews started settling in Lithuania as far back as the 14th century. In time, the capital city of Vilnius and other smaller cities became centers of Jewish learning. Vilnius was internationally known as the Jerusalem of the North. The Jewish community did not experience large-scale persecution until WWII, when it was almost completely annihilated during the Nazi occupation.

With all the good intentions of the Lithuanian relatives to give aid and comfort to Beate and her family, and perhaps follow them

in their footsteps to America, they had no forewarning that their own tiny country would be crushed under the German boot. After Beate and her family had successfully arrived in the United States, and had not heard from their dear ones for months at a time, the family became suspicious and concerned about their welfare. They made immediate inquiries with the International Red Cross, but learned that it was a hopeless situation to find them. They simply had become a statistic with the rest of their courageous countrymen. Hearing of their missing status was the saddest tidings the family had to bear.

THE SPONSOR

Immediate contact was established with the Americans living in Brooklyn, New York. All at once Beate had acquired a new aunt and extended family who lived abroad. The Americans had already read in the Yiddish Press in Brooklyn of the pressure mounting with an all-out campaign by the Nazi regime to get rid of German Jewry. However, they could not imagine the full extent of the depravity. From the moment the aunt received the family's distress signals, she made an instant effort to help them. She was a magnanimous individual without a doubt, and could not tolerate hearing of such terrible inhuman treatment committed against the European Jews.

Upon finding a willing sponsor, thanks to God, life became slightly more bearable for the family. The threat of uncertainty was lifted a bit, and the fear of succumbing to the horrors of the times, were momentarily laid aside. It was the beginning of a period of hope against hope.

A plethora of letters started crossing the Atlantic back and forth, in which requests and grateful acknowledgments were exchanged. All the complicated paper work and formalities required for the emigration process were gladly provided by the sponsors. The warmth with which this wonderful American family dealt with all the problems came through in every single letter they had sent. This exceptional concern and assistance was never forgotten by Beate's family for the rest of their lives. In looking

forward to a speedy journey, Beate's father once again continued with their emigration process with renewed vigor. He felt confident that all their needs would be met on time; and that they would be free from any danger.

On October 31, 1938, Beate's father received the precious "Affidavit" from America. He was overjoyed, almost to the point of wanting to kiss the document, but he refrained from such outburst of happiness, and turned it over to the American General Consulate for its consideration. In an accompanying letter to the consulate, he mentioned the fact that he was born in Sodarjan, Lithuania, and therefore, qualified for a Lithuanian Quota number, which was considerably lower than the American Quota number. Accordingly, he requested that his case of emigration be moved up for an early departure from Berlin.

On November 2, 1938, the father wrote to aunt Clara expressing his deep-felt appreciation for all the necessary papers she had sent. He emphasized the fact that, *"What a lot of trouble it must have been for you to get these important documents for us!"*

He continued to say that he really did not know how to properly thank her for all the effort and kindness showered upon them. It was the happiest day the family had known in a long time.

Aunt Clara was also advised that the father had been in contact with the American Consul about his files, and that he was under the impression that they would be leaving Germany in about two months, because his name was put on the Lithuanian Quota Waiting List.

On November 23, 1938, aunt Clara replied that she was happy to learn that the affidavit had been well received and forwarded to the consulate. She was very anxious to have the family "here" already. She also was very interested to know the exact date, and the means by which they were intending to make their crossing.

On November 30, 1938, in a letter from the consul, Beate's father was informed that the consulate had received the Intent To Emigrate to the U.S.A. document, and at the same time, the required documents from the interested foreign sponsor. All the documents were now placed in the family's file, and are being worked on.

Furthermore, the American consul informed the father of the procedure which follows the receipt of the earlier-mentioned papers. It was advised that all immigrants, will be placed on a waiting list. This list has a life span of several years. The family will be notified three months prior to when their name and number will come up, in order to allow sufficient time for application of transit visas which are an integral part of the travel package.

A postscript to the letter from the consul mentioned the fact that it was unnecessary in the interim while the papers are being processed, to make any further inquiries. The consulate was extremely busy with a heavy load of applications, and that everything takes its own time. So, therefore . . . "Don't call us, we will contact you after reviewing your documents!"

(signed) The American Consul.

At the beginning of the year 1939, aunt Clara wrote to the family that she had not heard from them since November 30, 1938. She surmised that there had been an unexpected delay in their trip. She had thought that by this time they would be well on their way. Not hearing from them, and suspecting the worst, she contacted the American Consulate, asking if it was at all possible to speed up matters, so that the family could be saved. She hoped that the consul would be able to comply with her wishes, and tell her something of the family's emigration status.

Aunt Clara showed her assertiveness, and pursued the case with all the vigor she could muster. The process seemed to her to be moving at a snail's pace, and that the family might be held back from making their exodus.

Six months had come and gone, and the family had not moved an inch. Naturally, the American relatives were very worried about the family's survival. In the meantime, a letter from the American consul informed the father that the family was placed on the Lithuanian Quota Waiting List with the identification numbers as follows: "III L."

In a follow-up letter from the American consul on February 7, 1939, it was stated that the mother and the children, were added to the list, and the waiting number was changed to: "I I I L. M.

N.P." The letter ended with the usual 'closure' of: "You will be notified in due time of any further proceedings."

On March 23, 1939, the American Consulate requested further evidence in various matters pertaining to the family's present personal status. They were also reminded that they were not to disturb the consul concerning their visas. Their case had not reached that point yet.

On April 21, 1939, the American consul sent a long list of requirements to be fulfilled. One of the demands was that the sponsor in America agree to some monetary fund for the support of the family, in order that they would not fall on public assistance after their arrival in the United States.

On April 24, 1939, Beate's father wrote a passionate letter to aunt Clara in New York. It seemed that the consul demanded proof of their relationship; and a willingness to post a deposit on the family's behalf with an American bank. The fund was to be accessible to the family as soon as they set foot in the U.S. There was no exact amount specified; which was left up to the discretion of the sponsor.

At the end of the letter the father expressed his frustration over the slow-down of all the paper work at the consulate. He honestly thought that by now they would be ordered by a doctor for their physicals; and then two days later get their visas. With all that accomplished, they would be free to leave perhaps by July the latest. Then the mother added her sad comments. *"My family and I beg of you, in addition to all your boundless generosity and love that you have already extended to us; that you please comply with the latest demands made by the consul for additional paper work."*

A postscript to the letter sounding a bit more cheerful came from the father, in which he stated: *"I am extremely happy to tell you today that I have been successful in getting permission to visit the consul on the 23rd of May. Will you be so kind as to arrange for the essential papers to be sent to me in good time, so that I have them in my possession when meeting with the consul?"*

In the meantime, a letter was on the way from aunt Clara to tell the family that a deposit in the sum of $1500.00 was made,

from which a monthly withdrawal of $80.00 is waiting for them upon their arrival in New York. What could be better? Now everything seems to be falling into place!

On May 26, 1939, Beate's father wrote a letter of appreciation to aunt Clara. He thanked her profusely for the bank deposit. There was an outpouring from his heart with words of praise and warmth of feelings. He let her know that he would be eternally grateful to her for all the kindness she has extended to the family. In addition, the father wrote that it has now come to light that the American consul had a change of mind about the amount of the deposit, and was now demanding an extra $1,000. The father further explained that the Jewish Relief Society in Berlin told him that it is common knowledge for foreign governments to want to increase the security deposits from time to time. On the other hand, the consul is of the mind-set that it is in the best interest of the family, that this current demand be quickly complied with. The father was in utter humility as he expressed the following: *"This is the reason now that I beg of you to please grant us just one more favor before the consul loses his patience with us, and perhaps prevents any more action or discussion to be taken in our case."*

As a postscript, the father fervently hoped that he would not seem to be too presumptuous in asking for more help. He wished that they would never have to use the deposit in the first place, but to become successful in finding employment as soon as they arrive.

Expecting that aunt Clara would not be cross with him for making further demands on her, he bid her good health and many thanks. The mother closed the letter with her best wishes and appreciation to aunt Clara for her unwavering and kind support at all times.

After sending the letter, the father got in touch with the Jewish Relief Society to discuss the matter of the increased deposit. He was told that they had no knowledge of how much was the required sum for a bank deposit. They thought it was entirely up to the individual country.

On May 31, 1939, Beate's father felt very disheartened. He wrote a letter to the consul instead of paying him an unscheduled

visit. In it he stated his Lithuanian Quota number as reference; and acknowledged receiving an Instruction Sheet dated May 25, 1939, for the preparation of the journey, which was well noted by the family. The contents of this information sheet, was in the form of a guide on the deportment of the travelers, and furthermore, some advance personal planning to avoid any unpleasant surprises while traveling.

On June 21, 1939, the father had sent a follow-up letter to the consul, in which he stated that he was sending further documents concerning an additional $1,000 deposit with the Public National Bank of New York. At the same time he was sending a letter from the affidavit sponsor to show that a total of $2,500 was placed in trust for the family. He was hoping that with this added sum of money, an early granting of the visas would be forthcoming.

On July 21, 1939, Beate's mother wrote a long letter to aunt Clara. She sounded very enthusiastic for a change. In her letter she explained that with their papers all in good order, they were expecting to leave in September of 1939.

However, that was not all she had to say. Right then and there, she exploded a bombshell. Her husband had recently learned, at the consulate, to his great dismay, that no quota number had been called at all in Lithuania. Imagine, all this time they were sure of getting their visas because the American consul had given them reason to believe so as far back as in June. What a revolting development that turned out to be!

The mother explained that she was very sorry and sad that their departure was held up. Now they would have to wait again, and couldn't say how much longer it would be before they were able to leave for good. All their hopes and dreams were absolutely crushed. Their daily circumstances were deteriorating. They were completely at their wits' end as how to go on living without any money and food. There was a gnawing hunger, and very little rations to keep up their strength. No longer is there a possibility for Jews to earn a living. Jewish aid is also reduced to immigration purposes. Only passage money is provided in extreme cases. That is all the Jewish Welfare can do for them.

The mother continued with a detailed, pathetic account of their daily living conditions. At present they were getting welfare in the form of one meatless, tasteless meal per day, which goes for 40 Pfennig. Both she and Beate would go every noon to a soup-kitchen, which is housed in a deserted store, to fetch the meager food in pots brought from home. This is done to keep one step ahead of malnutrition and prevention of illness. Their limited financial resources were nearly gone.

The mother's sad sentiments were further described as: *"We never were rich, but my husband always earned a decent living. At the same time, he never failed to take care of his sick mother, and a couple of unmarried sisters who relied heavily on his magnanimity. We have lived sparingly without being able to earn a single "Mark." But the end is in sight. We are at our lowest, and did not expect to have to wait this long, and to fall on such hard times."*

The mother went on to describe their day-to-day routine which had reached rock bottom: *"No progress has been made on our emigration. But, in the main, the family is persevering. The father is working hard on all the paperwork. The children are bored to tears. They have only a few hours of school to keep themselves busy. They are good children, considering they are cooped up in the apartment for most of the time. They get to enjoy the fresh air only on their way to and from school, and from an occasional visit to the balcony."*

In the next paragraph, the mother spoke to aunt Clara about a cousin which had left the flock in Germany many decades ago. This woman was a distant 'Mishpocha' – family member on the mother's side. As a young girl without much of a future, she had left Germany to try her luck in America. It was always rumored that she found and married a rich American. In her new social role she had cut off her relationship with the rest of the family. Many years later it was learned that her husband had died and left her a fortune, and that she had moved into a tower apartment at the famous and very exclusive Waldorf Astoria Hotel on Park Avenue in New York City. This grand lady had been living there for many decades as a recluse with her cats for company, and with never a thought of the family she left behind in Germany.

In her desperation, the mother thought that perhaps this woman could be contacted, and be informed about the family's dire circumstances. Possibly she could be persuaded to reach out to the family!

In her closing paragraph, the mother wrote: *"Whatever you can do for us would be greatly appreciated. Sometimes people in extremely poor circumstances, are driven to take desperate measures. We shall always be very thankful to you for all your favors!"*

Before signing off on her sorrowful letter, the mother expressed her deepest regret for having given aunt Clara so much trouble with relating all their problems. She hoped that with the possible added charity coming from the cousin in question, that they will see their way through until their journey materialized. She asked to be favored with an early reply concerning the wealthy cousin. She even went so far as to educate aunt Clara on the latest rate of currency exchange for Germany. It was her hope that her comments would not be taken out of context.

Beate's mother literally cried out for an understanding of her plight, and wanted aunt Clara to know that it was not easy for her to put into words the nature of things as they stood at the present time, but she was only thinking of her family's welfare in the end. The mother continued to say: *"It is so sad to see the children hungry. They never complain. Up to now they are healthy and coping with the situation; and are anxiously looking forward to their trip. They have been raised to be obedient children and to be respectful of everybody."*

The mother hoped that she did not bore, nor make heavy demands on aunt Clara's good nature. She could not stop herself from pouring out her feelings. The last thing she said was*: "At this moment we can not help ourselves. We beg you for help in the worst way. Some day we shall repay you for all your goodness. We are living on the edge with severe rations and all sorts of shortages. It would help a great deal, if you could send us a small sum of money to tie us over until we have weathered the period of waiting for our passage. For food, one might say we have enough. But the rent must be paid. If we cannot do that, there is the danger*

to be put out on the street. In that case there is no possibility of finding another place to live, because there are only a few apartments available for the Jews in our city."

As a final comment in her letter to aunt Clara, the mother stated that some time ago, she received word by way of Lithuania, that an offer for a brief stay in England was made, just so that the family was safe from any possible deportation to a concentration camp. Beate's mother deeply thanked the aunt for her kind offer, but explained that for the present, they were still focusing on the original journey which has been mapped out for them by the Aid Society. Hopefully, they will leave very soon.

Then she ended her lengthy letter with the hope that aunt Clara would continue with her generous help. And, they will wait and pray that the time won't be long when they will see and embrace each other.

Fall of 1939 had arrived and still there was no word of their departure. On September 25, 1939, the father wrote another forceful letter to the American consul, informing him that since November of the previous year, he had been registered on the Lithuanian Quota List, and so far had received no word about his case. He assured the consul that all requirements, including the added deposit with an American bank were met. And furthermore, on July 17, 1939, he had in fact received a confirmation from the consulate that all his papers were in good order.

On the strength of the foregoing information, the father begged that the necessary visas be turned over to him. He further informed the consulate of the following: *"According to earlier notification received, it takes about three months from the date of completion of all paperwork for visas to be issued. Here it is already six months later, and still we haven't received any visas."*

On October 21, 1939, another letter from the dear aunt arrived in which she stated that the mother's grieving letter had very much touched her. Consequently, she was worried about the family's welfare, that she immediately sent a small check to help them out. With it she said: *"We feel your pain. Take this money and use it in good health, and God willing, we hope to send you every month as much as we can afford."*

This was her way of performing a "mitzvah" – an act of charity. She also mentioned that the wealthy cousin living in the Waldorf Tower, was not available to talk to on the phone, but she would try again.

Aunt Clara's "gift of love," - a check, was sent through the H.I.A.S., an organization dedicated to serving destitute refugees with money and travel expertise. The organization advised the family not to stop making inquiries at the American Consulate; but to keep on trying. It may happen that for some reason other refugees are unable to use their visas, and then the visas would be transferred to whoever is ready to leave.

Aunt Clara ended her letter on a happy note. She hoped that with God's help, all their problems will be solved, and that they will be on their way as soon as possible.

On October 26, 1939, the father wrote back to aunt Clara to thank her once again, from the bottom of his heart. He assured her that she had won the hearts and minds of the family, and that they were praying to God that he will reward her for all her love, understanding, and devotion to their problems.

The family kept hoping that it would not take much longer for them to meet aunt Clara and her family. They wished to tell her in person how much they loved her, and that they felt deeply indebted to the many sacrifices she and her family were making solely for their benefit.

On December 6, 1939, the mother wrote another letter to aunt Clara to express thanks for the latest check received, which came just in time to help celebrate Beate's eleventh birthday. With the extra money Beate's mother managed to buy, on the black market, the necessary ingredients for baking a cake which the family savored for several days.

She also mentioned that cousin Flora, the rich American, was very kind to them after she had heard about their hardships. She sent them 100 Dollars to help them in their hour of need. The family was delighted with the generous gift, and put it to good use. Beate's mother again thanked aunt Clara for interceding with the distant cousin, and to have persuaded her to make such a bountiful present. She also thanked her for her offer to send future monthly

distant cousin, and to have persuaded her to make such a bountiful present. She also thanked her for her offer to send future monthly checks while they were stuck in Berlin. In closing her letter, the mother said: *"We shall never forget your generosity. We also hope that the time would be very near for us to start our journey!"*

In addition, the mother gave aunt Clara the assurance that her husband was in constant contact with the American consul. His daily routine was to leave home immediately after taking a mouthful of breakfast, and run off to the consulate to queue up for seeking assistance with the emigration papers. He would spend the rest of the day sitting around the various offices and hallways, trying to pick up important information that might be beneficial to their situation. It could be said that his daily visit to the Consulate kept him alert and busy on his objective, and proved to be a safe place for him to be during the random street arrests by the Nazi pack. Sitting around the house bored and nervous, would only have aggravated the situation..

Beate's mother further described the father's daily activities as being one of the regular applicants who is well known at the consulate, and sometimes a bit of an annoyance to the personnel. He knows it himself, but this is his way of being noticed and persistent in trying to bring his case to fruition. He is being told that there is very little to be done, and that they were momentarily expecting news of his Lithuanian transit-visas, which was coming directly from Kaunus, Lithuania.

In signing off, the mother reported to aunt Clara that all were well, and glad to hear the same of the family in New York. She closed her letter with a thousand thanks for all her good deeds, and wished aunt Clara and her dear family the best of everything and signing with: Lilly and family.

On December 28, 1939, in a letter to aunt Clara, it was the father's turn to thank her for the l25 'Speermarks' received. The father sounded very chipper in his remarks, and went on to say, that she could not imagine how high their spirits soared upon receiving the large, charitable check.

Beate's father explained to aunt Clara that they were not able to give proper thanks for all she had done for them. They could

only promise to never forget how generous and committed she had been to them over such a long period of time. He continued by saying that in regard to their journey, that there were no further developments at the moment. He had been at the consulate practically every day. There is nothing else for him to do right now other than to be patient. Their Quota number is quite low on the Lithuanian Waiting List, and unfortunately, there have been no orders to issue their visas. The father hoped to be called very soon. He further stated that when they are summoned for their physical examination, he shall certainly inform them per telegram. It is expected to take another six weeks waiting time after the visit to the doctor, according to the latest information.

Once again the father sent a thousand kisses and thanks for aunt Clara's love, devotion, and constant thoughtfulness to their needs. He hoped that they were all well as always. The same could be said of his family. With all their combined good wishes, and kindest regards, they remained, (signed) Max and family.

It had taken far more time than expected. The family was well into the new year. On February 3, 1940, another letter came from aunt Clara addressed to the mother specifically. It began as follows: "My dear Lilly and family, we received your latest letter of January 18th. The following day we had sent you another check of $20. We hope that you will use the money in the best of health."

On February 26, 1940, the father wrote a letter to the aunt once again. He thanked her for her check which came through the American Express in care of the H.I.A.S.

He continued as follows: *"There is no further news from the consulate. We must all show great patience in anticipation of more positive news. Our turn will come as surely as night follows each day. When all is in its proper place, we will hasten to embark on our long-awaited journey. We have managed to keep ourselves in good health through the cold days of winter. We shall remain steadfast. We hope that you and your family withstood the cold wave in America in the best of health as well!"*

For a change, the family had received a letter from aunt R. from Lithuania. She was also very active with the family's emigration process. She wrote to the family as follow:: *"My dear*

ones, We received your letter concerning your departure date. I was very excited when I received the good news and cried for joy. I still can't fully comprehend it! My good husband, has immediately, per airmail, written to his sister in New York (aunt Clara). It was suggested that she should extend the deposit date at the bank., in view of the long delay in your departure from Berlin. Hopefully all will go well with great speed!

Well now, you must have received in the meanwhile our package of food. We are certain that in a few weeks, we shall be able to send another such package. Enclosed in the package was some extra butter for Dago (father's brother also living in Berlin). In closing my dear ones, we say, make yourselves ready for your coming trip! Perhaps you will be traveling as soon as April or May. Good Luck to you!"

Another letter dated March 15, 1940, from aunt Clara greeted the family with the following: *"About three hours ago we received your latest correspondence and I am happy to tell you that another $20 is on the way to you. There is no further news from us today, except that we are all well. Let us hope that the time is at hand when we will be together in my country. With best regards from my family and myself to all of you." (signed) Your loving Clara.*

On March 29, 1940, aunt Clara wrote a letter to the bank in her native New York. She referred them to the agreement made on June 12, 1939, at which time she had deposited with that bank another $1000, She now wished to modify the date of said agreement to September 9, 1940, at which time withdrawals could be made.

On April 9, 1940, another "thank you" letter was written to aunt Clara, in which the father thanked her for one of her "gifts of love" so coined by the father, in the amount of 125 'Sperrmarks'. Beate's father was very happy to inform her that now the emigration process has taken a big step forward. The Customhouse Office had already examined their crates of household goods, which are ready to be packed and shipped ahead of the family's departure. And, the father mentioned that he had also received information from the Immigration Office to fetch the emigration papers; but he was still waiting to hear from the consulate

regarding a consultation with the doctor. With all these matters taken care of, he felt very optimistic about an early departure.

After their physical, they would be ready to leave in June the latest. The exact date and name of the ship will be given in due time. At the moment all he could tell them was that they will be taking an Italian steamer leaving from Genoa, Italy .

He closed the letter with the following: *"Without further news from here, I hope that all is well with your family. I send my best wishes for everybody. With my heartiest regards!"*

(signed) Max and family.

On May 2, 1940, aunt R. of Lithuania sent a letter to Beate's family in Berlin in which she wrote as follows:

: "My dear ones:
Your card with your birthday wishes was happily received by us. We are glad to hear that all is well with you. We were particularly gladdened with your previous card from which we gather that our dear sister Clara in America has sent you again something to help you with your daily living.

Regarding your immigration, it is too bad that you still have to wait. By the way, dear brother (Beate's father),how did you arrive at the idea that your Quota number came up in March, and now it has been changed to July?

We shall go to Kaunus ourselves, and inquire about the status of your affairs. In the case of our own immigration, we were told it could take six years. However, at the moment, we have no intentions of leaving. Only out of a strong necessity would we ever consider leaving our homeland. What shall my severely sick husband do in America? For his career in Dentistry he would have to pass a new examination. Then he cannot work in the overseas tempo. Unfortunately, this week he is very ill again. Today, he will have an X-ray taken. Anyway, here is enough despair. Don't worry about us! We greet you with our love!"
(signed) R. and M.

depart, but were troubled about passage money. They thought that the Aid Society would furnish the money, but were not quite sure about it. It seemed as though they had caught a snag. For one thing, they were glad to start soon, but on the other hand, they had no idea how to pay for their steamship tickets. In any case, the father reiterated to the Americans that they will be informed about the departure date as soon as possible.

On May 5, 1940, aunt Clara sent a telegram reading:

"Unable to find a proper ship."

On May 29, 1940, aunt Clara send another cable, as follows:

"Tickets paid. Everything in order. Pick up tickets at U.S. Ship Line Office – Unter den Linden #9." (address of line).

Besides the good news regarding their passage, the father was able to pick up the necessary visas from the American consulate the same day.

On May 31, 1940, the father sent a family photo to the Americans in anticipation of their trip, and to let them know that they were leaving Germany via Russia, Manchuria, and Yokohama on their way to San Francisco, California. The date of their departure was still vague.

On June 18, 1940, a letter went out to aunt Clara with the sad news that the shipline was not yet settled.

On July 1, 1940, aunt Clara addressed a letter to the family in which she advised that there is another shipping company called the American President Line, which also sails from Yokohama, Japan for San Francisco. The family were very much interested in this latest proposal. They were certain that their visas could be extended to meet the schedule of this particular ship.

Beate's mother received another letter from aunt Clara dated July 30, 1940, in which she confirmed having received a letter from the family dated July 13th, and a number of other letters as well. Aunt Clara went on to say that she was happy to receive the good news that the Lithuanian relatives will be able to meet with the family as they travel through their country at the beginning of their journey. She hoped that everything will come off well. She empathized that her family were also very anxiously awaiting the family's arrival in America. What a great moment that will be!

Aunt Clara further stated that she was delighted to hear that the train, which will carry the family, will stop long enough for the relatives in Lithuania to meet with them, and perhaps accompany them as far as the border. She could well imagine how happy everybody must feel with the prospect of seeing each other after years of separation. The two families lived in nearby countries, but hardly ever paid each other personal visits.

Aunt Clara, in her latest letter, wished them a pleasant journey. Then she bid them her heartiest regards, and asked Beate's father to convey to the Lithuanian couple when they meet, her thanks for all the help that they had contributed to the immigration effort. She ended her letter, "With all our love and best wishes, and Godspeed," (signed) Clara and family.

On August 4, 1940, the father used his last sheet of his business stationery to write to Herr Saenger of the Federal Union of Jews in Germany. The stationery showed the imprint of his former enterprise.

MAX MEYER.
Vertretung und Fabriklager Saechsischer
Tricottstoff-Fabriken
Berlin SW 68
Charlottenstrasse 77

The letter was addressed to the attention of:

Mr. Saenger
Federal Union of Jews in Germany
Department of Migration
Passage (Arcade) #4
Artlierstrasse 31
Berlin

In the letter the father advised Mr. Saenger that he wanted to thank him personally for the prearranged reservations for the passage arrangements on the "Heyo Maru" for the 25th of September, 1940, leaving from Yokohama, Japan. This was a substitute for the Italian ship of an earlier date. It was promised him that the tickets would be distributed in due time. However, according to what he has learned recently, it takes from the time of

procuring the Russian and Japanese visas, circa three weeks to receive the steamer tickets.

The father asked respectfully that he be given possession of the ship tickets, and /or any other proof of reservations on the steamship right away. He thanked Mr. Saenger in advance for his kind consideration and speedy cooperation.

On August l2, l940, another letter went out to aunt Clara. Beate's father sent his many thanks for her letter of July 30th, wherein she acknowledged his previous letter. In the meantime, the father had hoped that she had received his latest letter with some concrete development regarding their travel plans.

Beate's father writes as follows:

> "As it stands at the moment, we are very happy to communicate to you that we have gotten our passage confirmation for Tourist Class from the Japanese Line for the steamer "Heyo Maru."
>
> It is within our means to definitely start with our journey on September 5, 1940 at l0:45 in the evening from Berlin by train. Our steamer will pick us up at Yokohama, Japan on September 22nd. We shall dock in the port of San Francisco, California.
>
> Furthermore, I am very glad to tell you that the cost of passage will be cheaper than on any other steamer. It will cost $590 for the four of us. I beg of you not to pay for our tickets before you are asked by cable to do so.
>
> This afternoon I will get the Japanese visas, and after that I have to fetch, in the next few days, still the other visas for Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, and Manchuria. When that is taken care of, all our preparations and worries about the trip will be behind us.
>
> We have received a lovely post-card from R. and M. from Lithuania. They are very happy of seeing us soon, if only for a little while, and perhaps they will ride the train with us to the next border town. Their last card of August 4th had a new address. Did you know that they had moved? We were quite surprised and in the dark about it:

In the end, the father repeated his heart-felt gratitude for aunt Clara's untiring efforts to see them through their difficult times. He reiterated that he would never forget her generous help. And furthermore, he assured her that he could not have accomplished

such a tremendous feat of leaving the country without her vital and generous help.

Then the father closed his letter with the following lines: "We can scarcely wait for the day when we will meet and embrace you! In the interim, our hearts go out to you!" (signed) Max and family.

Meanwhile, the father meticulously examined the time table of their up-coming trip, and in so doing found a grave error regarding the connection with their steamship in Yokohama, Japan.

On August 17, 1940, a second letter went to Mr. Saenger, which read as follows:

Dear Mr. Saenger:
Re: Emigration
"Heyo Maru"

In reference to your important letter of August 14, 1940, and concerning the telephone conversation which we had on August 15th, I respectfully disagree with your departure date. It seems to me that you made a mistake with your calculations regarding the date we start out. You have come up with a date that is, I am sorry to say, three days too late for us to catch the steamer in question.

According to information from reliable sources, I learned that the distance between Kobe and Yokohama is only six hours, and not two days as you stated. In order to make a timely connection with the above-mentioned steamer, we must without fail, leave three days earlier, which means either on the 5th or 6th of September, in order that we do not arrive in Kobe or Yokohama when the steamer has already left. If we miss the September 27th, deadline, then we might be stuck in Japan indefinitely, and can say "Sayonara" – good-bye to America.

Even were we to take a plane, we would still not be able to make the ship connection on time. I beg you, therefore, not to issue our train tickets for September 9th, but instead to find an earlier date in order that we might reach our designated steamship on time.

Again, I take the liberty of speaking out, because you can readily understand that this matter is of the utmost importance that we reach our chosen ship at the proper time. And, as an additional consideration, I wish to beg you to see to it that our Russian transit visas be forthcoming at the earliest date

Respectfully,"

(signed) Max Meyer.

On August 23, 1940, the family received a letter from the Aid Society. It speedily advised the family that 'oral word' from the Russian Foreign Office has been received for the issuance of their transit visas under Number D III/2III.. The letter was signed:

Martha Sara Geissman.

That same day a letter was written by Beate's father to the National Federation, regarding the steamer "Heyo Maru." It was addressed to Mrs. Geissman, and read as follows:

"Dear Mrs. Geissman:

Enclosed you will find the signed papers by my wife and children for the Russian Consulate, for the purpose of applying for visas.

At the same time, I wish to inform you and Mr. Saenger, as well as Mr. Marcus, that I am leaving Berlin on the 2nd of September, 1940, and shall continue my trip from Moscow on the 5th of September. Once again, I wish to take the opportunity to kindly remind you that I expect, on time, the necessary papers consisting of the Russian transit visas, railway tickets, and ship passages.

In recognition of the extra work you have done on our behalf, I respectfully thank you, and sign off with my best regards."

(signed) Max Meyer.

In this letter, Beate's father used rather strong language to get his point across in order to put their travel plans into action. He was determined to have the family on that ship no matter on whose toes he stepped. They were living on borrowed time, and the father was tenacious about getting immediate results.

CHAPTER V

THE START OF WWII

The year 1939 was a very unsettling year with war machines building up in Europe and the Far East.

On September 1, 1939, the German army invaded Poland. The English sent word to the Germans that unless they stopped, Britain would declare war. They had until eleven o'clock in the morning of September 3rd to comply. The hour came and went without a word. The long dreaded WWII had begun.

During the family's race against precious time, much was happening around the world. Hitler was on the move into Poland despite its brave Resistance Fighters. By 1938-39, France and England looked to form an alliance to deter the Germans from aggression into neighboring countries. Japan was just as restless with its expansion into Manchuria, a small area, which Beate and her family would later enter en route to Japan.

By August 1939, the RAF – British Royal Air Force, was bombing Berlin to the great astonishment of the Germans. For the first time thousands of citizens waited hours in their basement air-raid shelters while Allied bombers were heavily bombarding their cities. These constant bombings were in retaliation of Hitler's "Blitzkrieg" – war of lightning on London, which were poundings of sudden, overwhelming air attacks. It was encouraging to see the British manage to keep a stiff upper lip in spite of the heavy German bombings destroy her major cities.

Beate did not escape the experience of sitting up many a nights in an air raid-shelter as bombs exploded nearby in the neighborhood, but luckily, never close enough to strike her own building.

Just before the family left the city for good, a new restriction was placed on the Jewish tenants, which called for keeping their distance from their neighbors while in the air-raid shelter. Of course, Jews were assigned the least preferable part of the basement. During these air attacks Beate and her friend Dorle exchanged stealthy glances at each other. They made limited

personal contact by exchanging notes which passed through many fingers before falling into the right hands. The brave little girls made a game out of a bad situation, which at least prolonged their friend-ship that much longer.

When the eerie all-clear signal sounded in the early morning hours, everyone rolled up their blankets, threw on their coats, took to the stairs, and quickly make for their apartments with hardly a word spoken. People were beginning to feel the lack of sleep due to these unpleasant nocturnal visits by the British. After each attack the public was apprehensive in facing the open streets for fear of heavy structural damage, and the smoke filled air.

In order to make the most of lost time, the women brought their meager supply of peas for shelling, and potatoes for pealing, and talked about stretching the meals, or using the "ersatz" – substitutes which were being allotted. The children spent time playing cards and games, and getting a lot of reading done with the aid of their own small flashlights. The men, if they were not serving as air-raid wardens, or helping with the fire-brigade, played chess and checkers to pass the time.

The Jews of course, did not have to worry about work the next day, since they no longer held jobs. They were secretly having their "Schadenfreude" - glee at what was happening, and only hoped to make their exodus before more bombs came crashing down on them.

PASSPORTS

The time came for the family to receive their passports. The first chance Beate had to examine her very own passport was in April of 1940. It had a khaki-colored cover with dark lettering and a black eagle sitting on a wreath with a swastika in its center. The number 06570 was printed on the bottom of the front cover. The passports were marked with a bold letter "J" on the outside cover, which identified them as Jews.

Beate turned to the inside page to look at her photo, which she thought was very unflattering of her. She then asked her mother

why they had to leave their friends, relatives and country, and go off to some foreign place.

The mother gave a brief explanation for having to leave everything behind that was near and dear to them. She reassured her daughter that now she would know in part the reason, but that later she would more fully understand the cause.

Beate could not take her eyes off the passport. She examined it further, and noticed that she had a new middle name. It was strange to be given the name of Sara. She had learned about Sara during her religious training. Sara was the wife of Abraham, and the mother of Isaac, but it was quite puzzling to her why she was given this famous name. She showed her passport to her brother, and when he examined his own, he noticed the name of Israel appearing as his middle name. The children quickly learned that all Jewish females had to adopt the name 'Sara,' and all males had to carry the name 'Israel.' This was just another means by the State of identifying a Jew.

To cite another example of Hitler's crude official orders against the Jews in 1941, a year after Beate and her family had safely settled in the U.S.A., was the institution of the infamous yellow patch with a black Star of David to be worn on all outer garments. To further insult the beleaguered Jews, the city provided a few yellow-painted benches in the public parks. But that idea was senseless, because no mindful Jew would have subjected himself to such public humiliation.

Among personal descriptions in the passport, was the question of distinguishing marks. As a matter of fact, Beate had a visible scar to report. It was a small but nonetheless obvious mark on the left side of her forehead. This came about when she climbed the fence in front of her apartment building a few years earlier. Dorle, her steadfast friend was with her at the time of the accident. She had warned Beate against taking a chance of balancing herself on top of the fence. But, Beate, the young athlete, could not resist the challenge, and got away with a deep cut which required a few stitches. At the moment of the injury, Beate didn't feel a thing. However, her concerned friend Dorle saw the blood trickling down Beate's face and went to help her.

The two girls quickly ran to Dorle's apartment because it was nearby. As fortune would have it, Beate, ran into the comforting and skilled hands of Dorle's father. He was an engineer by profession, and a person who was knowledgeable in many areas. Therefore he could fix anything that came his way, including medical emergencies. He immediately took some disinfectant and applied it to the wound, thereby stopping the bleeding, and then heavily bandaging the area. Afterwards, he walked a sobbing Beate to her apartment to face her mother. The unsuspecting and squeamish mother did not take the situation lightly, instead she nearly fainted on the spot when she saw the big bandage on Beate's forehead. "Calm down, Mrs. Meyer," Dorle's father said in a reassuring voice, "Beate will be just fine." He recommended that a doctor have a look at the deep wound because it may leave a hideous scar. After the mother had collected her composure, and thanked the kind father for coming to Beate's aid, she immediately took her daughter to their Jewish family doctor.

The need for stitches was confirmed at the doctor's office. Throughout the treatment, Beate acted courageously, not a whimper came out of her. She felt no pain except when the needle punctured the skin.

After the surgery, mother and daughter on their way home stopped by the ice-cream parlor for a couple of cones and spent some time that afternoon on a park-bench, still painted green, licking their ice-creams and bonding ever so closely.

Beate was still attending pubic school when the accident occurred. A week later, her class made an excursion trip and had their group picture taken. This picture was the last, and constant reminder of her wonderful circle of school-friends, and all the happy days she had spent with them. It also nudges her memory of the accident. She is easily identifiable as she sits proudly at the side of the photo sporting a big bandage, and not minding it a bit, because it made her stand out from the rest of the crowd.

The passport was valid for a whole year, and good for a one-way trip only. On one of the pages was marked the German Transit-Visa No. 146211, dated August 13, 1940. It further indicated that the holder of the passport had intentions of immigrating to the

U.S. Also permission was granted to enter the USSR – Russia through several different cities. The Russian visa was valid until September 14, 1940 to enter the city of Chita, and to exit from the USSR through the city of Otiod in a period of 14 days from the moment of having crossed the Russian border.

On another page of the passport it was noted that the named person, Beate Sara Meyer, traveling to the U.S.A. on a transit visa is permitted to stay in the city of Moscow for two days, up to September 8, 1940.

It all seemed so incredible to Beate that she and her family would be embarking on the trip half way around the world. They would be given the unique opportunity of seeing many sights and places she could have only imagined . The time for the family to flee the country was quickly drawing near.

≺ CHAPTER VI ≻

PATIENCE PAID OFF

The family's travel plans were an enormous undertaking. Many months were spent on repeated visits by the father to the American Consulate to check on the progress of their Quota number. Beate's father would return home late in the afternoon with a downcast face, and describe the scenes that took place at the consulate which became so familiar to him.

As usually, he was kept waiting in the halls of the large gray building which took up a whole city block. He was not impressed with the surly staff working at the consulate whether they were Germans or Americans. Sometimes he would mimic them just for the cheer amusement of it, and the family would break out in laughter, which was to the good of their morale. The father thought that these employees were very crude characters with nasty tempers to boot. They had the bad habit of putting their feet up on their desks, with the soles of their shoes practically stuck in the father's face. They also talked in a strange manner. When they spoke in their native tongue, and the father could pick up some familiar words, it always sounded to him as though they were speaking with a hot potato in their mouth. Another noticeable habit of theirs was their heavy use of chewing gum, which made their speech even more difficult to understand, and their facial expression very comical.

Beate's father was still thinking of alternative destinations for the family. He had heard of refugees without affidavits going to Haiti, and its neighboring country, The Dominican Republic in the West Indies. These were places for young folks to begin a new life, but for a middle-aged person like Beate's father, it presented a problem, since it called for a whole new way of life in an agricultural economy. Looking further into the matter there were still other options open such as Shanghai, China. China was very benevolent toward the helpless Jews by accepted 20,000 refugees

thereby saving many valuable Jewish lives. It was later learned, from those refugees who had settled there, and eventually found more permanent homes in other parts of the world, that they had a very difficult time living in ghettos - restricted areas, and in later years, under the yoke of Japanese occupation. Beate's cousins, Inge and Gita and their parents, who had left Berlin in the mid-30's, were among those transient refugees spending some difficult years in Shanghai. After Beate and her family had resettled in America, they were able to help bring that family to the United States to start a decent new life in California.

A new order of immigration laws began in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's term of office (1933-45) in the U.S.A. America was willing to take in the full annual quota of 27,270 immigrants from Germany and Austria. After the 1938 pogrom – Crystal Night, the American Immigration Department allowed approximately 12,000 to 15,000 refugee visitors to the U.S. to remain for an extended period.

During the long waiting period for the Quota number to come up, Beate's family became extremely impoverished. The father's business was closed by order of the government. By this time all the family's savings were spent. Without work, there was no money coming in to support the family.

The dream of escaping their tormentors was fading fast, and at the same time, the consequences of being left behind were almost unimaginable. The family could simply linger no longer. They were in a quandary as to what to do next. At first, all the family's valuables were sold for cash. This was done secretly, because Jews were not allowed to sell or pawn their costly belongings. When that money was spent on daily necessities, the family had to move to a smaller apartment in the same building, and fell on hard times and the mercy of the Jewish Welfare Agency.

In prosperous times, the family lived in a big flat at the front of the building, and when they changed apartments to a smaller, darker apartment at the back, which was divided by a paved courtyard, they also had to sell many of their beautiful pieces of furniture. Besides the daily meal from the soup kitchen, the family

now had to depend on help from America in the form of monthly checks and 'care packages'.

The winter of 1939 proved to be a particularly cold one with heavy snow. The family remained calm and patient in anticipation of their Quota number to come up. February came and went without any sign of hope. Food became very scarce and expensive to buy. Whenever Beate's mother heard from neighbors, of food being sold at the open-air market, a few streets from home, she would put on her warm winter coat, hat, and gloves, and queue up in the frigid air, for a pittance of a fish or a few potatoes. By the time she got home her fingers were numb from the cold, and the father had to peel the gloves off her nearly frozen hands.

Beate's friendship with her close friend Dorle was now practically expired. During that harsh winter, the girls saw less and less of each other, and on those rare occasions when they did meet, it was in great danger of being caught by a party official. On one occasion they accidentally ran into each other in the stairwell of their building and stopped to talk to one another. Then suddenly, they saw a woman entering the building, who was well known to be a big wheel in the Nazi Party. They quickly ran up the staircase leading to the roof to avoid being seen by her, but it was too late they were spotted at once, and ordered to come down to her level. When they slowly descended the stairs to meet her face to face, they shook in every limb of their body for fear of being arrested. They were lucky this time. She only gave them a serious lecture on the punishment of associating together, and left them with a strong warning that if she ever caught them together again they would suffer the consequences.

In the meantime, the immigration process was moving very slowly, because the American consulate was heavily burdened with hundreds of refugees wanting the same services. In spite of all the excuses and pitfalls, Beate's father kept up the struggle of reaching a triumphant end. He had everybody busy on his case. At long last he got the go-ahead signal for the family to begin their journey.

The family was not without their constant 'Angst' - fear of being picked up for deportation to a concentration camp half-way

in the pursuit of their emigration. The wonderful timely "care packages" and "gifts of love," – checks, which came pouring in were the best medicine to ease their anxiety, and for keeping the faith of making their escape a reality.

THE LONG AWAITED TRIP

And then one fateful day, at the beginning of September 1940, the moment of truth had come to the family, which had so patiently waited for nearly two years. The father's success in getting permission to start their journey this very evening carried the day. He rushed out of the building of the American Consulate for the last time, and came home with the greatest of speed, and the strongest sense of pride for having accomplished his mission. He could hardly hold back his great sense of happiness as he walked with big strides toward the subway station. When he came out of the underground, he quickened his pace, and practically ran home the rest of the way as fast as he could. With is head held high and the big bulge in his overcoat holding the precious documents, he hurried to share the good news with the family. Finally there was reason for rejoicing.

In all the excitement the father nearly forgot to call home. He did manage to find a public phone in the subway station to call a neighbor, a non-Jew who owned a phone, which the family were welcome to use for any emergency. By this time the family's telephone had long been confiscated. The neighbor in turn called the mother to his apartment to take the important call.

The children were spending their free time outdoors. Beate was riding her bike around the block. Her brother was hanging around the corner news-stand and talking to his friend the owner. After the mother heard the thrilling news, she was so excited and went straight for the hall closet to dust off the suit-cases which stood ready to go at a moment's notice.

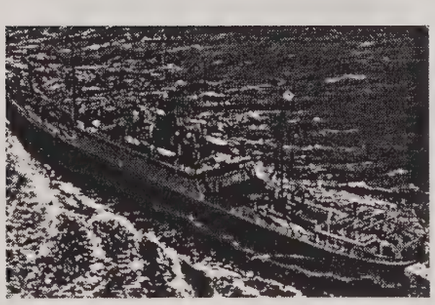
When the father entered the apartment, he missed hearing the children's voices. He picked up the mother by the waist and danced her around the kitchen table for joy. They kissed and hugged each other, and felt deliriously happy. Then the father went

Beate's class picture.

Beate and her mother and brother in the neighborhood park.

.Beate & brother Bernard as toddlers.

Beate and Dorle in school play

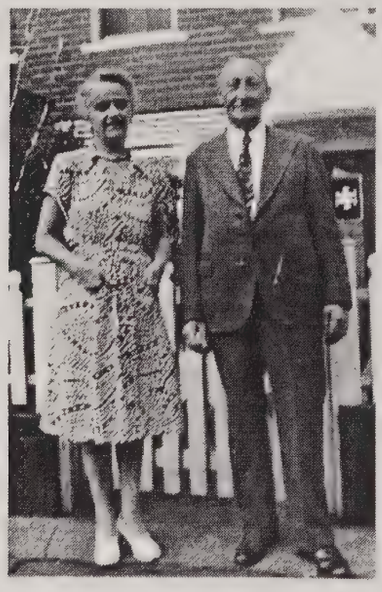


Steamship the family sailed on in September of 1940.

Beate in the 1990's.

.Beate in classroom before 1938.

Beate as a 6-year old holding cone of sweets for first day at school.



Beate's parentsin the 1950's in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Beate revisiting w/friend Dorle (courtyard & basement stairs leading to air-riad shelter).

out on the street to collect the children. He met Beate just as she was turning the corner on her bike with one hand on the handlebar calling out to her father "Look at me, daddy, I can ride with one hand!"

Her father was in no mood to admire her latest talents. He instantly gave her a look of annoyance, and said in no uncertain terms, to get off that bike, drop it and leave it in the gutter, and come with him at once. Beate obeyed his command and followed him into the house. His mien was stern and forbidden, which caused her to be frightened.

Next, the father went down to the corner news-stand and herded the brother home. At first the children were confused by the father's strange behavior. However, once they were home, he explained to them the true reason for having been quick and gruff with them in getting their attention, because of the big event. When they learned about their imminent departure, there was a outpouring of great joy. The end of their long struggle to get away from all the terrible conditions of misery and cruelty was near. Now their thoughts and energies could be put to getting ready for the trip.

For a starter, everybody had to take a last hot bath; and then dress warmly for the trip abroad because the weather was going to turn colder as they neared Russia. Their nearby relatives were contacted and asked to see them off at the train station in the evening. While the father was on the phone in the neighbor's apartment, the mother was busying herself in the kitchen making a racket of opening and closing cupboards in looking for scraps of food to be consumed completely in their last supper. The family sat around the kitchen table eating in semi-silence and deep thought. As they carefully chewed every last morsel of the mother's potluck meal, their eyes wandered over familiar objects in the small kitchen. There were the familiar plates decorating the walls, and the well-used calendar marked with special and cancelled dates, in bold letters. The mother took one last look out of the kitchen window facing the court-yard where she so often stood watching her children come and go. This was farewell to good and bad times!

It was also time for Beate to say farewell to her best friend Dorle. She stole away for a few minutes, to pay her dear friend a last secret visit, and to give her one of her prized possessions as a going-away present. A large multi-colored glass paperweight exchanged hands in good faith and remembrance of their long, loving friendship. Dorle was also prepared for their eventual parting. She had bought a special present for Beate and given it to her with her deepest affection for their long friendship. Beate was so touched with the handsome red-plait cl[illegible]n-covered diary, which her dear friend had given to her for the journey. It was just what Beate needed to record her experience along the way. Then quickly, the girls kissed, and after a long warm embrace let go of each other. They knew that this was their final good-bye, and they would never see each other again, because of the distance between them and the terrible war. But, as destiny would have it, the two childhood friends had a reunion nearly sixty years later. It was truly a miracle, a "Mazzle" - good luck and good fortune, that blessed their lives and continued their great friendship.

THE BEST SHIP

It was truly a wonder how everything came together after all the proposals and rejections for a well-timed steamship had come and gone. The family continued to hang on to their hope, although it was getting late. Then in the nick of time, they were taken by complete surprise when aunt Clara discovered the perfect means of transportation.

The finding of the American ship came like a bolt from the blue. Aunt Clara was determined, one way or another, to have the family come over, and her unrelenting efforts paid off.

Beate's family had planned to sail on a Japanese steamer from Yokohama on September 22, 1940. However, it was discovered, at the very last moment, that this particular ship was no longer available to the family. All their well-laid plans, even with the capable help of an agency in Budapest, Hungary, which was quite active in helping to provide passage on steamship lines for many of the refugees, was of no avail. However, aunt Clara did not give up

on her hard put family. Having helped them with their struggle to simply survive during the past two years, was not enough for her. She now had solved the last of their problems. The family had prayed together for help out of a quagmire, and they now got their wish.

Beate's family were totally dependent on aunt Clara because she had the financial means to assist them. It was exacting, tedious work on her part to find the perfect connection by sea. With the limited time that was left to her, the little lady with the big heart, had managed to find the ideal ship to put the family's plans into action.

Passage was ultimately found on a small American steamer called the "S.S. City of Los Angeles," one of the sister ships of the American President Lines. The ship was to leave from the port city of Yokohama, Japan making its Pacific crossing to the gateway of San Francisco, California on September 23, 1940, which was just fifteen months before Japan declared war on America , and thus would have made this unique crossing impossible. The Atlantic Ocean, which would have offered a shorter route, of only three to four days, was out of the question, because of heavy sea battles fought between Germany and England.

The family were now absolutely ready to start on their long epic journey to reach the seaport at Yokohama, which lies on the western shore of Tokyo Bay about 18 miles south of the capital city of Tokyo. The small steamship was part of a shipping company that specialized in the route between Yokohama and San Francisco. The San Francisco seaport was at that time the chief U.S. harbor on the Pacific coast. Beate's sea voyage covered nearly 6,000 miles, and took a little over three weeks.

LEAVING BERLIN

Beate opened her new diary given to her by her dear friend. She felt apprehensive as she was about to make her first entry regarding her departure. Leaving her native city of Berlin, was a feeling of intense sadness and regret. On the other hand, it was her family's good fortune to have met all the demands put on them by

various authorities, and to finally see their way clear to embark on a great adventure to save their lives from a fate destined for annihilation.

Beate was dressed for her long journey in a pretty red scotch-plait, woolen dress, which her mother had made for her out of remnants from the father's former fabric stock. The mother looked very chic in her soft navy blue wool coat with a fox fur-piece strung over her shoulders. Beate's brother was dressed in his knee-high pants suit and cap to match. The father looked the picture of a diplomat in a light gray chesterfield, gray felt hat, and impressive leather briefcase containing all the important emigration and travel papers.

As the family arrived by taxi at the "Berliner Bahnhof " – Berlin Central Railroad Station, their relatives were already gathered to wish them bon voyage. Dim lights blanketed the train station. A black-out was ready in anticipation of a nightly dose of bombings, compliments of the British RAF. The Battle for Britain began at the end of the summer of 1940, while the family was still not sure of their future.

When the Germans targeted London, the Brits thought this was a deliberate effort to wage a war of terror and nerves on its civilians. They decided to retaliate by sending planes to bomb Berlin. The effect on the population was demoralizing and devastating.

Because of the heavy air-attacks on Berlin, Beate and her family could not consider flying out of the city. Aside from that, accommodations on a plane were very expensive. It was also impossible to cross the Atlantic Ocean by ship, because of U-boat and warship activities. In the end, the only escape route open to the family was by a combination of land and sea travel eastbound.

In the dark of the train station, Beate could make out lots of figures milling about. A million points of light, in the form of flashlights, glowed in the station. Beate had brought her personal flashlight along, which she had often used late at night to find her way to the air-raid shelter. Tonight she did not need it, nor would she ever again. She planned to give it away to a relative.

Tears flowed freely like a water fountain as the family said their farewell to the unfortunate relatives who had to stay behind. They hugged and kissed each other to the last moment. When the train whistle blew, as a signal to leave, the family let go of their loved ones, and quickly boarded their train carriage. Once inside their spacious compartment, the father pulled down the window to speak to the saddened relatives, and give them last minute instructions as to the disposition of the things left behind in the apartment. Then the rest of the family joined him at the window to say their last farewell by waving their hands and wiping away their tears.

One of the last steam trains puffed its way out of the Berlin train station, and was headed East to the Baltic States, leaving all those who were dear and near to the family behind to face difficult times ahead. Most likely they would never see nor hear of each other again. Fortunately, one other couple of the whole family managed to survive the horrendous ordeals of persecution and war, because one of the partners in the marriage was a non-Jew. They joined Beate and her family in America several years after the end of the war.

The Jewish Aid Society had done an incredible job of carefully crafting a smooth land and sea journey for the family to follow. Its corps of volunteers, in a collective effort and dispersed all along the route the family was taking, acted in the capacity of "guardian angels. "They were always ready and able to give a helping hand no matter where the family showed up during their twenty-day land tour. The work that they performed, during a mass evacuation of Jews from all over Europe, was unimaginable. Without their unselfish, tireless assistance, it would have been impossible for the many confused and anxious refugees, including sole children on a transport minus their parents, to navigate their way across the globe.

Beate tried to commit her last day in Berlin to memory. She remembered that weather-wise it was a beautiful time of year. The air was crisp and dry during the day. She remembered the incident with the bike. Father had surely frightened her half to death with his rough manner. Later at home he softened his ways and said:

"Jetzt geht es um die Wurst" ("Now is the moment of truth") meaning: now we are ready and on our way to freedom!

Before shutting down the apartment, Beate ran back to her own room to have a last look at all the possessions she was leaving behind. She mainly went to fetch a small, honey-colored, furry Teddy which held a special place in her heart. She asked her mother if she could take him along on the journey. He had been with her since her first birthday, and had become a favorite object of comfort and reassurance. She hated to abandon him. The mother completely understood her feelings, and gently explained that the Teddy would get over the separation, and that she was growing up and something new in her life would take his place. They quietly closed the door and dried their tears.

As the old steam locomotive pulled out of the darkened railroad station, Beate sat near the window of the compartment ready for a long mystery ride. She fell silent and reflective as she listened to the roar of the turning wheels on the metal tracks. It was an unforgettable moment. As the movement of the train swayed her gently back and forth, she began wrestling with the idea of how she would like America? At times she felt so confused and scared that she wanted to open the window and stick her head out to shout: "I will be back when this is all over"

The train was well on its way to the frontier city of Koenigsberg, the capital of former Prussia, and later renamed Kalinigrad by the U.S.S.R. It was September 3, 1940, as they crossed the German border into Lithuania, a country in the Baltic States in northeastern Europe. The compartment occupied by Beate and her family, was luxuriously appointed with soft dark-red velvet upholstered seats which converted into beds at night. On either side of the walls in the compartment were two more folding beds for the children to sleep on. The big question on everybody's mind was how would the four of them get along for the duration of the trip cooped up in such limited space?

While the train was picking up momentum, Beate's mother was catching her breath from all the rushing she had done during the last few hours of preparation for their final departure. She sank

into her comfortable seat with a long sigh of relief, followed by an outpouring of thanks in which she said:

"We made it, we are on our way!
Thanks go to dear God,
And our wonderful Aunt Clara, for their help!
But how are we going to adopt to a new way of life?

The father took her hand, and lovingly assured her that everything would work out well. They must have faith, and God willing, they will safely reach their destination and be happy there.

Beate sat quietly in her seat looking through the closed window. The ride made her pensive, and she closed her eyes and thought about Hollywood and her beloved movie idol, Shirley Temple. Perhaps there would be a chance to meet with her. She would tell her how much the children in Berlin loved her. It was all a childish pretense, but it kept her mind focused on the future, and her eyes dry for the next few hours.

Everything went according to the well-structured plans of the HIAS, the Jewish Aid Society, who had found the escape route they were taking. This outstanding organization had devoted all its time, energy, and financial assistance to the immigration of thousands of Jews in Nazi Germany and beyond.

A WANDERING JEWISH FAMILY

The family traveled very light with only the clothes on their backs, and a few light pieces of hand-luggage containing some changes in underwear and toiletries. The large suitcases were in the train's baggage car. All refugees were instructed by the Aid Society to take such items as toilet paper, soap, toothbrush and paste, and towels, which were no longer available on German trains. The family were allowed $10 each for any emergency which might develop along the way. This small fund of money was held in the father's frugal hands.

They also carried extra non-perishable food items such as dried fruit, cheeses and crackers, and some canned goods because there was no dining car attached to the train.

It was the beginning of September of 1940 when the family left their "Heimat" - homeland. Germany was heavily involved in the war with England. The U.S. had helped England with 50 destroyers, at the time German U-boats were attacking allied ships.

As the train traveled northeast to the frontier the family had their passports ready for inspection. There was a long stop at the border station while the agents went through all the luggage aboard the train.

The family's next long stop was in Kaunus, Lithuania. This was the prearranged rendezvous with the Lithuanian relatives. Beate's aunt and uncle, whom she had never met, because they lived outside of Germany, were most anxious to see the family, and perhaps ride along with them for a short distance.

The relatives were eagerly waiting at the station as the train pulled in. In no way would they have missed the opportunity of seeing the family and helping them out with food stuff to take along on their long journey. The relatives had brought baskets full of wonderful food the likes of which the family had not tasted in years. There was sausages, cheeses, freshly baked bread, rolls and lots of canned goods. The aunt even surprised Beate's mother with a pair of new shoes. The mother was deeply touched. They hugged and talked about the possibility of seeing each other again under better circumstances, but no mention was made as to where or when. Much later, it was discovered that they were never to see each other again. It is assumed that the relatives and all their countrymen were murdered during two days in September of 1941, a massacre that ended 900 years of Jewish life and culture in Lithuania.

The train made many short stops for border inspections. At one of these inspection points everybody was ordered into the station-house for a complete examination. Beate's brother happened to be napping. When the train conductor saw him curled up on the seat he asked what was the matter with the child. The mother explained that he was not feeling well. The man took pity on the boy and let him sleep undisturbed.

At another stop, the inspection was more intense. All passengers had to leave the train on the double and line up inside

the station-house, and wait for their turn to be examined. The mother later told the family that she had to completely strip, while a burly looking woman dressed in a white coat, looking like a doctor, gave her a thorough examination. She also picked up the fur piece, which the mother did not want to leave unattended in the train, and stuck her fat fingers in its mouth to check for any hidden valuables.

At the next stop, just as the train was coming into the station, a male passenger created a commotion by jumping out of the rest-room window into a wooded area. The chase was on. Whistles and gun-shots were heard throughout the area, but the fugitive got away. It felt almost surreal to the excited passengers, and served as a momentary break in what was otherwise a very monotonous ride.

At still another point along the way, the train stopped for a longer duration. Beate's brother was feeling a bit of cabin fever, and decided to stretch his legs. Being twelve years old, and mighty curious, he decided to take a walk to see what was at the other end of the train. As he went from car to car he ran into an elderly refugee woman, who stopped to ask him if he would like to earn himself some pocket money? The job called for fetching her cold drinks from the club-car. She was a diabetic with an insatiable thirst. The brother agreed to the proposal, and immediately went to work for her.

The train had been detained at the station for quite some time. Suddenly, it occurred to the parents that their son was out of sight. When the whistle sounded the parents became panic-stricken and started looking for the conductor. They asked him if he had seen the boy, whom he knew, and to please contact the train engineer to have the train detained for a little while longer, while they had a look around for him. News of the missing child spread like a wildfire. Soon many concerned passengers joined the search.

While all this frantic searching was going on, who should come strutting down the aisle, but the enterprising young man with a proud look on his face, and his pockets jingling with coins.

The father wagged his finger at Beate's brother and marched him off to the compartment for a good meaningful talk. It was left up to the mother to make the apology. She felt terribly embarrassed

as she explained her son's escapade to the conductor and all the friendly passengers who were only too glad to see the boy back in the fold, and the train ready to leave.

Beate's mother had been terrified during the brother's disappearance. She imagined all sorts of scenarios of what might have happened to him. She thought perhaps he had gotten off the train and taken a quick walk into town and lost his way back to the train. It also occurred to her that he might have been kidnapped, since he was very handsome, and could fetch a good sum of money. After the boy explained his whereabouts, they took pity on the old woman, and thereafter gave him permission to carry on with his job.

The train picked up speed as Beate stared out of the window looking at the passing landscape, which was mostly agricultural in nature. Ever so often she would step out into the corridor of the train to visit the magazine rack. One day she overhead a conversation between two travelers standing nearby, who were talking about a fellow refugee who was teaching English in his compartment for a nominal fee. When she confronted her father about taking private lessons, he replied:

> "I feel so sad, that we cannot afford such a luxury right now. I would love to be able to give you a head-start with the new language, but it is not possible."

CHAPTER VII

ITINERARY

The route the family were taking as planned by the Jewish Aid Society was not without its problems. In regard to the distance from Germany to Russia, it had come to the committee's attention that leaving via Berlin-Charlottenburg on a Sunday at 22:45 for the connection to Eydtkau – German frontier custom-stop on the way to Moscow, had often met with complications.

Frequently, the connection was missed, and an extra day was needed to stay in Moscow, which was very costly. This is caused by many travelers having too much luggage, which requires more time for custom's inspection. The officials in Eydtkau also complain that passengers didn't stay in their compartments for passport inspections. Therefore, it was advisable for travelers to leave Berlin on a Wednesday instead.

The family obeyed the advice of the Aid Society and took their course of travel as follows:

BERLIN - Departure September 3, 1940
Over Koenigsburg - Eydtkau
Over Kaunus (Kowno) – Vilnia - Cudogai

MOSCOW - 0vernight at the Metropol Hotel
Sight-seeing in the afternoon

Departure the next day with short stops at major cities.:
Sverdlovsk, region in the Ural Mts. of Western Siberia.
Novosibirsk , a territory of the U.S.S.R. in Western Siberia.
Irkutsk – a Southern Asiatic U.S.S.R. city near Lake Baikal.

OTPOR, Manshouli, Manchuria

HARBIN, China – a province in Northeastern China,
Overnight in a hotel.

KOREA, Fusan – a seaport in Southeastern Korea
Board a ferry for

JAPAN
Shimonoseki – a city on the coast of Honshu, Japan.
Crossing the Sea of Japan.

Kobe, Japan – a city also on the Southern coast of Japan.
Taking train to last stop on land.

Yokohama, Japan – a seaport in Honshu, Japan near the city of Tokyo.
Board the American steamship.

TRAVEL INFORMATION.

The following information was provid ,d by the Jewish Aid Society to the tourists.
For the distance from Berlin-Moscow, the traveler must provide for his own food and drink. Travel time is 42 hours.

- For a stop-over at a Moscow hotel and food, the cost is included with the train fare. Hotel vouchers will be distributed upon arrival at the Jaroslawer train station. Travelers will be awaited by a representative of Intourist, who will escort them to their hotel.
- For the distance of Moscow-Otpor, Manshouli, the traveler will be fed in the dining car of the train, and sleep in the sleeping car. The cost for food and sleep are included in the train fare.
- For the distance of Manshouli (Manchuria) - Harbin, the passengers must, with their own money, (the $10 per person brought from Berlin), look after themselves. En route to Kobe, Japan, catering will not be available on the train. Most likely it can be expected that food will be provided, but cannot be guaranteed.
- Travel time from Manchuria to Harbin is 20 hours. Reports have been received from previous refugees, that the possibility exists that there might be extra food on board the train, which is always kept in reserve for long distances.
- The Jewish Community in Harbin – Jewish Community Artleriakaja will be advised of the family's emigration through the Shanghai Aid Committee. This was all possible because of a close network between emigration agencies throughout Asia. Both in Manchuria and Harbin, the travelers will be met by representatives – escorts of the Jewish Community.

- En route to Manchuria-Fusan, Korea, the train has sleeping cars. The cost for the bed ticket is included in the fare.
- The continued trip from Fusan to Shimonoseki, Japan is several hours on a small ferry.
- The route Shimonoseki-Kobe-Yokohama is by train. There is a Jewish Community in Kobe, by the name of Evans Kobe, to which the travelers can turn in case of any emergencies.
- The Committee Kobe is for the express purpose of extending advice, mediation, and intercession for travelers about to board their shipping lines. Invariably, there is a problem with clearance of luggage, accommodations, and food for the transient travelers. It also falls upon the Committee to occasionally help out with expenses by travelers whose personal resources are very limited. The address of the Committee is as follows:

  Jewish Community of Kobe (Ashkensine)
  Migration Office – Wanderungsamt
  Nr. 6 Yammoto-dori
  I Chome
  Kobe, Japan Telegram: "Jewcom" Kobe.

- Travelers to Kobe are not allowed to alight from their train by themselves at the Kobe Station, because it lies in another urban district. Every passenger should leave the train at the next station (about 4 minutes later) at Sannoiya. Travelers will be given information at Shimonoseki as to when the train arrives, and which train to take next to continue their trip to Kobe.
- It is recommended that before arrival at the train station, a telegram be sent to the agency to announce the arrival of the travelers so that an escort can be sent to meet them. It is impossible to have representatives wait on every single Express arriving. The telegram should read as follows:

  Jewcom Kobe
  Arriving
  Name, time, how many travelers
  Sannomiya.

- Should any traveler, for lack of awareness of their arrival time, not be picked up, they are allowed to find accommodations at some other medium priced hotel, and the agency will try to take care of the charge. The agency's house is about ten minutes from the train station Sannomiya. If one is unable to carry their luggage, someone will come to assist them.
- Those travelers who have defrayal - pre payment for a stop-over in the city, or have their own resources, could look for one of the following hotels:

  lst Class: Tor-Hotel, Oriental-Hotel
  2nd Class: Yamato-Hotel
  3rd Class: Wakaatau-Hotel, Belmone-Hotel
- However, it is stressed here, whoever chooses his own hotel, cannot expect the agency to foot the bill, since the agency can offer considerably cheaper lodgings. The Committee begs the travelers to exactly follow their instructions.
- In Kobe, the travelers are to announce themselves to the shipping line. For a stop-over one can count on 10-15 Yen per day (1 Yen = 05872 Mark)
- It is recommended that the travelers have a small amount of money from their foreign sponsors, transferred to the official Japanese Travel Agency "Japan Tourist Bureau" Kobe or Yokohama for the defrayal of the stop-over expenses.
- In Yokohama the Committee has a representative by the name of Leopold Mund 16 Nishi Taken-Omarve on whom one can turn for all possible difficulties. Also, it is necessary for the traveler to announce himself at the ship line. For a stop-over in the city, the same conditions prevail as in Kobe. The New Grand Hotel is recommended in Yokohama.

HANDLING OF LUGGAGE.

In general, hand luggage must be packed in solid suitcases, not boxes. A large, durable ticket should be affixed to the luggage,

marked with the name of the passenger in capital letters. Also the destination: Kobe/Yokohama should be indicated.

It is recommended that in Berlin the luggage be delivered at the Charlottenburg –Zoo, Friedrichstrasse, Schlezischer train terminal, since this terminal is especially equipped for traffic to Russia.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE AID SOCIETY

a) Hand luggage to be taken on the trip Berlin-Kobe/Yokohama, should contain all knives, forks, plates, hygienic products, towels and blankets.
b) The remaining suitcases, taken as passenger luggage, should be baggage-checked on the trains.
c) It is advised that at all transfer points, passengers carry their own luggage to the next train.
d) While traveling through Russia, it is important not to carry any publications, newspapers, letters, and cameras. During transit through the country, luggage will be sealed by customs inspection, and not allowed to be opened until after leaving the country. Hand towels, soap and toilet paper are to be taken along, since none of these exist on the train.

FREIGHT COST AND FREE LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE

a) On the trip up to Japan, luggage other than hand luggage is charged Mark 13.65 per kilogram. Up to 35 kg per person can be registered. For additional weight, a forwarding agent should be contacted. The Jewish Community in Berlin makes a contribution for the cost of this luggage.
b) Luggage after Japan. On the ship from Japan, the traveler has free passenger baggage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TRIP

1) As provisions for the long trip, particularly until Moscow, the traveler should take a reasonable amount of foodstuff that will keep fresh for a long period of time.
2) Avoid taking a camera, because during various customs examinations, this could lead to difficulties with the authorities.
3) Inasmuch as the travelers are not fluent in the English language, it is advised to acquire an English-German dictionary and phrase-book to be taken along.
4) Since during the trip through Asiatic Russia, the nights are often cool, it is recommended that a travel blanket be taken along.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROAD TO RUSSIA

Beate's diary further documented that up until now things had gone well for the family. They had met with their Lithuanian relatives, enjoyed their company during the long stop-over, and feasted with them on some of the many delightful foods they had brought for them.

The family was now headed for Russia, which before 1917, was a big empire in eastern Europe, ruled by a czar – an emperor. Its capital city was formerly St. Petersburg, but was later changed to Moscow. At the end of the twentieth century (1991), some of the 16 constituent republics which made up the U.S.S.R. decided to become independent upon the political collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union.

As the train advanced toward Russia, all window shades throughout the train were drawn. Passengers were warned against raising the shades to look out while the train was in motion. Beate was naturally curious about the outside world. Whenever the train made a stop, she looked far and wide and found an entirely new environment. The countryside looked bleak, poor, and foreboding.

Free tea, magazines, and bedding were furnished on the train. Outside on the station platforms, venders loudly cried out their specialties of hard-boiled eggs, meat-pies, and boiled red beets available for very little money. When the train whistle blew, to announce its departure, the window-shades came down again. While the train proceeded on its way, a small unit of young, handsome, Russian soldiers guarded the corridors to enforce the prohibition against raising the window-shades. On Beate's frequent trips to the magazine rack she nearly brushed elbows with these young soldiers, even though they were wielding bayonets, which were more for effect than anything else. Beate, almost in her teens, was quite captivated by the soldiers' healthy looks and handsome uniforms.

There was no doubt about Russia preparing for military action, consequently, the secrecy behind the drawn window-shades. After sharing a part of Poland with Germany, Russia demanded that she be allowed to establish military bases on the territory of her small neighbors. At the same time, Russia was growing in military power, and even threatening Hitler.

While the Germans were occupying France in 1940, the Russians incorporated the Baltic countries, which endangered the lives of Beate's relatives living in Lithuania.

The children never grew restless during the long trip, because every minute of it was part of an exciting adventure for them. As the train trundled along its tracks in dismal weather, it was good for the family to be inside the warm coach, and wait for the arrival in Moscow, a city of enormous history and size, which had much to offer for Beate, the tourist.

THE MOSCOW EXPERIENCE

At last the German train pulled into the massive Jaroslawer Railway Station, so named after its destination. Without fail, the reliable ESCORTS of the Jewish Aid Society, were already waiting to welcome the family and their fellow travelers at the station. The group were taken to a spacious waiting room replete with people. The huge room was well-appointed with tall gray marble pillars, and a long winding staircase going up to a mezzanine. Beate was astonished at all the grandeur of the place in a country which so far had looked very poor to her. It was so different from the train-station she had left from in Berlin. Where the latter was old and dark, this present palace of pillars was light, airy, and magnificent.

Beate sat down on the first few steps of the marvelous staircase. She rested herself from the long, tiring train ride. As she felt refreshed after a short pause, she began to notice the sights and sounds around her. While her parents and brother were busy talking with the ESCORTS about hotel reservations, and their short stay in the big city, Beate directed her gaze at the masses of people congregated and socializing in their unique way.

Beate was not prepared for such grandeur of a waiting room at the busy terminal. She decided to pass her time by people watching. The huge room was filled with wall-to-wall people of various ethnic backgrounds. Beate's eyes fell upon a group of garrulous peasant women who wore full, colorful skirts spread out about them as they squatted on the tiled floor. They reminded Beate of the gypsy stories she heard her mother tell her when she was a little girl. Those women used to wander through the cobble-stoned streets of Frankfurt, Germany, where the mother was born, and sing short ditties about the wares they were selling.

Today's travelers in front of Beate's eyes were a motley group, as they sat huddled together looking like a clan of "babushkas" – grandmothers. But upon closer inspection of their ruddy faces, they were actually quite young. The many layers of clothing they wore made them look chunky and older. For head covering they wore the traditional kerchiefs in many beautiful colorful designs.

Some of the women were energetically talking while nursing their infants. The older children were running noisily through the halls of the station. The men stood apart in small groups talking and smoking their pipes and cigarette butts. They were the guardians of all their worldly possessions tied up in large blankets, or packed in cardboard valises which were tied with rope or belts to keep them together. They wore hats and caps in all shapes and colors depending on their place of origin. All of them looked like poor hard-working peasants or migrant workers on the move.

Turning back to Beate's emigration process, which the family had to struggle with for so long, it was common knowledge, that every applicant who wished to enter the Soviet Union – Russia, had to present a written request for permission to do so with the Russian consulate in their respective city. When such permission was granted, a visa stamp was entered into the passport.

Beate's father had carried out these instructions exactly as he went from consulate to consulate in person, since he did not trust the ordinary mail to accomplish this important step in the chain of procuring the emigration papers. The time limitation and point of

entry into Russia were stipulated and correctly affixed to the passports.

The transit visas gave the family only two days in Moscow. The old Metropol Hotel in the center of the city, was their temporary home for the short stay. Their accommodations were comfortable and clean in what must have been at one time, an elegant hotel. The building was several floors high with a gilded cage lift –elevator. As part of the Russian décor, a stuffed, brown giant of a Russian bear stood with outstretched arms on his hind legs. It greeted hotel guests on the first landing of the staircase. When Beate unexpectedly came upon the huge animal, she got quite a fright.

While the father was looking after the hotel arrangements, with the kind help of another pair of ESCORTS, Beate, her mother and brother were shown to their suite on the second floor of the hotel. One of the rooms was a bedroom for the parents, and the adjoining room, which was a sitting room, was intended for the children. Both rooms were lavishly furnished with thick carpets and heavy antique furniture. The windows were hung with thick drapes, which made the rooms look opulent and very dark..

The children spotted a piano in the sitting room. The keyboard was open and looked mighty inviting to some idle hands. As soon as the children sat down on the bench, and tried to make beautiful music together, an irate hotel employee, momentarily taking care of the beds, turned on them with a wild dash and menacing face, and was prepared to close the cover of the keyboard on their hands. The children recoiled in fright, but learned their lesson, that when in Russia, everything is "No."

As tourists to the city, the family and their cohorts, were given a brief excursion of some of the major points of interest. After lunch and a short nap, the family were taken by motor coach to the center of the city to visit the famous Red Square. When they got out of the bus to walk on the cobblestone square, they soon came to the citadel of Moscow, formerly housing government offices of the Soviet Union. The fortress like structure was surrounded by a high brick wall studded with battlements and towers.

The local guide spoke in fluent German to them, and explained that since the transfer in 1908, of the Soviet Government to Moscow from St. Petersburg, the Kremlin - the fortress-like building, has been the seat of the government. Beate and her brother were getting a first-rate history lesson as the friendly guide made the tour very interesting for them. They also saw Lenin's mausoleum (1870-1924) - a large imposing tomb, where the long-dead Bolshevik leader's embalmed body lies, which stood immediately in front of the Kremlin.

Lenin was the Russian revolutionary leader of the Communist Party, and later premier of the Soviet Union (1918-1924). All this history of the country was very enlightening for the tourists, but they were not allowed to visit the inside of the Kremlin without a special pass. This was no terrible disappointment for them, because they had to move on and many more places to see.

Before leaving Red Square, Moscow's huge central plaza, the visitors paused to admire the magnificent structure of the Cathedral of St. Basil, a unique combination of nine churches famous for its vivid colors and onion-shaped domes. Beate took a long hard look at the beautiful colored domes decorating the old church. It was a feast for her eyes and a delight for her heart. She thought it was one of the most beautiful sights she had ever seen. This stunning edifice was a quick distraction from her plight of danger of just a few days ago.

There was much to see and so little time to savor it. The evening should have been spent in such places as the Ballet or the Opera. But that was a luxury which the family could not afford on this particular trip.

Among Moscow's many art treasures was the unique Moscow Metro Gallery. It is part of the underground subway system, believe it or not! It is often referred to as the underground palace, being a combination of technology and art. The name is short for the Metropolitan District Railway, taken from its prototype in London, England.

Each individual subway station is filled with priceless collections of art works in paintings, mosaics, marble walls and benches, crystal and more.

The idea to create an underground subway system was first discussed before the Revolution of 1917. By the turn of the century, the trolley car, then the only means of mass transportation in Moscow became inadequate. A project appeared in 1912, but WWI prevented it from materializing. It was Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), dictator and premier of the Soviet Union (1941-1953), who decided to build an underground kingdom no matter how much labor or material is would cost. The first subway line was opened in 1935 and had 13 stations. During WWII, the Metro was used not only for transportation, but as an air-raid shelter and hospital.

Beate and her family were shown one of the beautiful stations, just to get the flavor of this unusual transportation line filled with a wealth of art. The tourists rode on a modern escalator deep into the abyss of the station to view the most breathtaking art treasures. In addition to magnificent oil paintings, Beate saw effectively placed chandeliers, mosaic murals, and many more art objects. Everybody in the group was astonished by the degree of wealth, and so openly displayed, without a single guard in sight. It all seemed unreal! Beate was besides herself, she could not comprehend why such treasures were buried in the basement of the city. Later she learned that this subterranean flaunt of wealth and beauty was built on the backs of 50,000 peasants, mainly from Siberian slave labor camps, who never saw the light of day again, nor got to enjoy the fruits of their hard labor.

On the second part of their sightseeing tour, they were taken to the famous GUM Department Store. The store was abounding in rubber galoshes. Every glass showcase featured the same merchandise. It looked like the sale of all sales. Besides the lack of merchandise, the store had a stark interior. The building itself was merely a symbol of modernity, without an inventory. This combination of circumstances triggered Beate's memory of the famous German Department Store by the abbreviated name of "KDW", which was always richly stocked with the latest in fashion. There was never a shortage of variety to chose from.

Visiting "KDW" was always a special occasion for Beate and her brother. The whole family made a day out of it by eating lunch in the basement restaurant. They would order "Belegte Broetchen"

- rolls filled with cold cuts and cheeses. Everybody would have a glass of beer; the children were permitted to drink black beer, to wash down their crispy rolls. Afterwards, the family stopped by the Children's Shoe Department. Beate and her brother had their foot sizes measured with an X-ray machine of advanced technology, which always fascinated the children. Then each child proudly carried his own chosen pair of shoes in an attractive-looking bag embellished with the store logo. Those were pleasurable shopping trips taken with their generous parents.

At the end of their short stop in Moscow, the family felt they were fairly treated by the general populace They were also very glad to have had the opportunity to personally mingle with another society. In other words, they came, they saw, and now it was time to resume their flight to freedom.

CROSSING SIBERIA

The family continued their journey on the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which carried them into the wide, desolate region called Siberia. Beate and her brother got the impression that Siberia was a very ominous-looking part of the earth's surface. They were told that this region was used for holding convicted criminals and political prisoners for many decades. In the later part of the 19th century, the Russians began to build the Trans-Siberian Railroad from the Ural Mountain range in the East to the city of Vladivostok on the Pacific coast of Russia. The railway line is the longest in the world. It runs 6,000 miles built on territory seized from China in 1860, and was completed in 1905. Its name means Lord of the East. Several cities like Harbin, China grew up along it, and would be visited by Beate during an over-night stay on their transit through the area.

Beate and her family took comfort in their heated compartment of the Trans-Siberian train. The children were well informed ahead of time about this special train, but now they had the privilege of actually riding on it. It was an exciting trip across one of the most fascinating, and little known areas on the atlas. Most people had only heard of its dark side of freezing

temperatures, and penal colonies and the like. But, Beate did not see anything of the sort, as she sat comfortably in a moving train, out of harm's way, and crossing a no-man's land.

The family had boarded the Trans-Siberian Railroad at the Moscow station and stayed on it until a transfer to the South Manchurian Railroad at some point in Manchuria. Riding across the steppe, or plains, dry and bare of any growth, was like crossing the Mojave Desert in southern California. The landscape looked dim and flat. Beate was nearly stupefied at the vast void of the land. She sat quietly gazing out of the window, and occasionally dozing off.

Some sections of the land mass were scattered with small wooden farm-houses. But, for the most part, it was a wide, desolate and unchanging strip of land. The frozen hills blended into an omnipresent gray sky. The six-day journey from its starting point to finish, appeared to be of epic proportion. The run of miles of railroad track was an unforgettable experience of non-stop movement.

Another view of the enormous landscape were the many lakes in the area, of which Lake Baikal, the largest in Asia, was an unforgettable sight. There is no lake in the whole world like it. It is called the "Pearl of Siberia," and the oldest and deepest lake in the world. The clarity and purity of its waters is legendary. Beate was moved almost to tears by the beauty and calmness of the surface as the train circled part of this enchanting lake, in the southern part of Siberia. After leaving the lovely area, the train passed the cities of Omsk, Tomsk, Tobolsk, Stalinsk, and finally Irkutsk, where the family switched trains.

Passenger who could afford it, were able to spend a comfortable evening in the dining car as the train sped across the Siberian wilderness. It crossed many bridges along the way as noted in a journal by Beate's brother. Tea was served all day, and always brought to the compartment by a white gloved waiter. Beate learned that this time of year, was the best season to traverse the land, when birch trees, visible from time to time, and as mentioned frequently in Russian literature, turn to brilliant colors.

A friendly, German-speaking train attendant engaged Beate's brother in conversation, since he observed that the boy was greatly interested in anything that moved on wheels. The congenial man told him the history behind the train he was proud to serve. The railroad was built in 1891-1905 by means of a secret treaty in which China granted to a Russian construction company the right to build the railroad through Manchuria. It gave Russia access to the Pacific via a link with the Chinese Eastern Railroad, also of Manchuria. Beate's brother listened very carefully, filling his journal with facts and figures while at the same time keeping up with his tunnel count, by adding 38 more tunnels which had to be bored through during this massive railroad project.

After riding a great distance on the comfortable train, at a certain juncture in their ride, somewhere in Manchuria, the family and their companion refugees, had to get off the train, and transfer their luggage on their own to a second train, which was the South Manchurian Railroad. It was a very impressive looking train with the utmost in comfort..

Beate's brother was later informed that in 1931, Japan took over Manchuria and its railroad. This action affected Europe because it revealed the weakness of the League of Nations when dealing with a great power. The League of Nation was a group of nations established January 10, 1920, by the Versailles Treaty, to promote cooperation and peace. It was dissolved in April of 1946, and was succeeded by the United Nations after WWII.

At about the same time, Japan annexed Manchuria and called it the Independent Republic of Manchukuo, but everyone knew that it was a Japanese "puppet state." In February 1932, Manchukuo declared its independence. This was the territory through which Beate and a small group of refugees traveled. As a matter of fact, Beate's transit visa #1475 stated: "This transit visa is good for one transit through Manchouko via Fan Tien within six months from date of issue, but valid for ten days after entry." It was dated August 13, 194.

Beate used the last of her post-cards to write to her dear friend Dorle. On it she described briefly her impressions of Moscow from its subway treasures to its street urchins running about, as seen

from her hotel window, carrying watermelons under their arms, which looked very comical to her. There was just enough space on the card to describe the most extraordinary feature of the Siberian landscape, which included the beautiful Lake Baikal, as seen from the train window. She ended the card with her apology of having to break off the correspondence, because there was no more money for postage. This last post-card, however, had a most miraculous history. From its mailbox in Harbin, China, it traveled a long distance through vast regions in Asia, passed isolated parts of Siberia, and major Russian cities until it found its way back to warring Berlin into the hands of the beloved school-friend. And there it lay dormant until fifty-nine years later, when Beate returned to Berlin to find her roots and friend, and to hold the precious card once more in her own hands.

After the family had switched trains, riding the Manchurian Railroad, offered them a combination of comfort and efficiency. The family sat back and relaxed while watching the diverse countryside, which included rice paddies and farm country. Overnight they slept in their four-bunked carriage on the train.

Manchuria was an uneasy mix of competing interests. Japan had invested heavily in the area and because of the railway, they controlled much of South Manchuria. This land-area was supposed to be a part of China. On September 18, 1931, Japanese troops guarding the South Manchurian Railway to the north of the town of Mukden set off explosives along the railroad track and accused the Chinese of the sabotage that they themselves inflicted. The Mukden incident provided the pretext for the Japanese army to take over Manchuria.

VISITING HARBIN.

The Manchurian line of the Trans-Siberian Railroad brought the family to their overnight stop in the city of Harbin. The small hotel for their short stay was enclosed by tall stone walls. There was no greenery to speak of. Not so much as a single tree was to be seen in all the immediate area. The buildings and homes in the neighborhood were all one-level, weather-beaten, but in livable

conditions. Beate noticed open channels running below the curb of the sidewalks for collecting rain-water. Pedestrians must take a big step over the curb to avoid getting their feet wet. The entire area in which the hotel was situated, was as far as Beate could see, rather ancient and drab. It was not the type of place one would want to linger, but it served its purpose for the moment.

Harbin is a city in the northeastern part of China, and also known as Manchuria to the West, and Dongbei to the Chinese. It is a city that has sometimes dwelt on the geographical fringes of the Chinese empire. Passing through this area, one sees almost nothing but monotonous stretches of plains with various forms of grain. The winters are long here. Beate and her family were traveling during the month of September in mild weather, and made it through just prior to the onset of a harsh winter.

The travelers were given a brief orientation of the region. They learned that many nations fought over the various corners of this region. Russia, Japan, and China clashed over the area during the first half of the twentieth century. At the present time it was enjoying a peaceful existence. The family passed the landscape in sheer silence.

Were it not for the introduction of the China Eastern Railway to Heilongjang province, Harbin would probably still be the sleepy fishing village that it was before the turn of the twentieth century. But as a result of the Russian-built railway line that once passed through Harbin, to link the Trans-Siberian Railway to the port of Vladivostok, Harbin became the second largest city in northeast China.

The Harbin railway station was located in the center of the city, and the hotel was not far from there. This modest hotel had an interior of Oriental ambiance. The entire drab complex, with its empty hallways, felt creepy to Beate. It did not make much of an impression on its European over-night guests.

The wandering group of German refugees were courteously welcomed and quickly checked-in and shown to two large rooms on the ground level of the hotel. The women and small children were directed to one room, and the older boys, like Beate's brother's age, who was approaching his 13th year, were directed,

together with the men, to the other large room. After a short period of freshening up, and the storing of baggage, the group of travelers filed into a large dining room which stood ready for the new incoming wave of refugees passing through the city. A plain, hot meal was served in a very efficient way to the group of hungry travelers. The meal consisted of steamed rice, vegetables, pieces of fish, and lots of small dishes filled with dips. Not every one dug-in all at once. Beate had her reservations about the fish. After being shown how to use the wooden chop sticks. And with a little practice, everybody got the hang of it, and ate hungrily. The best part of the meal was the piping hot aromatic tea, which washed down anything that was notably foreign and distasteful to the newcomers.

After the travel-worn guests finished their meal, they were shown to their respective sleeping quarters, which were the same large rooms they had visited upon their arrival. However, for the night, both rooms were converted into sleeping quarters. This was easily done by using individual straw-mats rolled out on the bare floor, and neatly placed side by side, leaving hardly any room in which to get to them. A small white, roll-like pillow, presumably filled with fine rice, served as a head-rest. After everyone had chosen a mat, settled down for the night with just the removal of their shoes, and pulled a light blanket over their tired body, the lights went out.

This was not the case in the men's dormitory. While the women and small children were falling asleep, the men had heard about some special bathing facility for men only in the basement of the hotel, and were hotly negotiating a deal to use it. Beate's father was one of the interested parties. He was quite curious and tempted to see for himself what this attraction was all about. However, when he was told of the fee, he was hesitant in spending his reserve funds on anything as frivolous as a hot bath. But after some strong persuasion by the hotel manager, who was eyeing the father's beautiful, leather briefcase, a deal was struck whereby the briefcase changed hands, and the father had a relaxing scrub in a hot tub. The next morning everybody felt well rested even though they slept on a hard floor, and were eager to get on with the journey.

0N THE SEAS

After a quick breakfast, the refugees took their leave of Harbin and its cobblestone streets. It was time to get started on another series of train rides. Their first stop was at Fusan, a seaport in southeastern Korea where a ferryboat was to take them across the Sea of Japan, a narrow body of water, to the city of Shimonoseki, located on the coast of southwestern Honshu, Japan. Honshu is the largest of the many islands forming Japan. Its chief city is Tokyo, which is situated close to the family's final destination of Yokohama. However, from Shimonoseki, their itinerary first took them to Kobe, a city on the southern coast of Japan. From Kobe they changed trains, for the last time, en route to their rendezvous with the steamship at the port of Yokohama.

Before Beate was ready to sail on the ocean-liner, she experienced a far shorter and more unusual ferry crossing. It all started quite innocently, but when a mass of passengers kept boarding the ferry without a let-up, the family wondered if they were on the right boat. It no longer resembled a simple ferry, instead, it took on the appearance of a Noah's Ark with a hodgepodge of humanity, such as holiday seekers, plain working folks, and farmers with their marketable goods. The small single deck was quickly filled beyond capacity. There were no rest-rooms aboard the ferry. The short crossing was one continuous scene of confusion recorded in Beate's diary as follows:

> "After a swift wind caught up with the ferry, the waves began to swell, and the tiny, wooden ferry started to rock, roll and toss about the waters. Then suddenly, a storm broke out and began to play havoc with the light craft, showing no mercy to its frightened passengers. All at once an emergency broke out all over the tiny ferry. People held their heads and stomachs, and could think of nothing else but to dash for the railing of the boat, to get some measure of relief. It seemed like an epidemic of sea-sickness had struck the masses. Beate and her family were no exception to the calamity. When the dilapidated, unfortunate ferry made it to the Japanese shore, its passengers clapped their hands, and broke out in smiling faces for having survived their ordeal. They then came staggering off the ferry looking like a bunch of drunken sailors."

Having left China for Japan in this fashion left an indelible impression on Beate's mind. At the Shimonoseki port, where the unkindly ferry discharged its dazed passengers, the family was again met by some very sympathetic ESCORTS who listened to the family relate their horrendous experience on the sea. Of course, the ESCORTS had heard the story many times over, and were only too eager to put Beate and the others at ease, and prepare them for the last leg of their land journey, before getting on the steamship.

The family had to make one more stop in the city of Kobe, a city on the southern coast of Honshu, Japan. It was September 21, 1940 when they arrived in the city and were immediately taken to Dr. Fujiwara's Clinic and Hospital to be vaccinated against smallpox. The good doctor gave each one a shot in the arm and handed them a certificate with his personal signature and stamp. None of the patients felt any adverse reaction, so therefore, the travelers regrouped and got ready for their train ride to Yokohama.

In Yokohama another pair of friendly ESCORTS had been waiting for them for a couple of hours, fearing that their train was late, and they would miss their ship. As it turned out, their arrival time in Kobe was botched up. Now the clock was ticking away; and time was of the essence. Phone calls had already been put in to detain the ship's sailing in hopes that the family would show up momentarily. A pair of taxis with their motors running stood ready to rush the family to the pier.

As soon as the family arrived at the Yokohama train station, looking disheveled and tired, they were taken in a hurry to the taxi stand, and assured that the ship had been alerted of their lateness. The family quickly got into the cabs and were on their way to the pier. One cab took Beate's brother and the luggage, and the other cab carried the rest of the family.

The taxi drivers were given orders to drive as fast and safely as possible, sounding their horns as soon as they came within sight of the waiting ship. The drivers went straight to the chase, speeding and zigzagging through busy, narrow alleys filled with all sorts of light vehicles and people on foot. As the cars came within sight of the pier, they spotted the steamer preparing to leave with its gangway dangling in mid-air.

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A group of deck-hands were moving about the ship unfastening ropes, and doing the usual tasks to put to sea. One of the senior officers, dressed in a smart, white uniform heard the loud hooting and tooting of the racing cabs coming toward the ship. He immediately gave orders for the gangway to be lowered again. The family arrived just in time. They scrambled out of their cabs, and with the help of a couple of friendly sailors, embarked the tilted gang-plank.

Unbeknown to the hurried family, a large crowd of highly-spirited passengers stood by the rail on the first deck celebrating their up-coming voyage by throwing streamers over the railing, and watching the stragglers coming aboard the ship. They may have wondered if the latecomers were of any significance to be holding up the ship. Without any further delay, a tug-boat neared the side of the ship to guide it out into the Pacific Ocean, bound for California.

Beate spent the next two weeks at sea. She thought how peaceful it will be. There won't be any trains to catch, or strange-looking hotels to over-night in. She will be able to pretend to be on an extended holiday just like the rest of the ship's passengers.

The steamship called the "City of Los Angeles," had a single fire-engineer red funnel blowing smoke atop the middle of its upper deck. The family traveled in two separate cabins, Tourist Class. The Dining Room aboard the ship was huge and lavishly decorated. There were several attractive lounges and parlors thickly carpeted and beautifully furnished in regal furniture for spending time in idleness.

Beate, wasted no time in making herself feel at home on the soft, comfortable couches and cushioned recliners. When she wasn't thumbing through the fashion magazines, she sat herself down at one of the ornate writing-tables, freely using the ship's embossed stationery for copying lines out of the magazines in order to practice her English.

Part of the entertainment on board the ship was an extraordinary opportunity for the children to watch two classic

films. On the first Saturday they saw "Gunga Din," which the brother liked very much. However, on the next Saturday, the film was the mighty "King Kong," which frightened Beate nearly out of her mind, and made her clutch her brother's arm ever so tightly. It was the first time the children watched an entire movie in English.

Beate felt very privileged to be sailing on such a fine ocean liner. Both children were old enough to look after themselves. In a short while, they made friends with a coup'e of friendly crew-members. One of the men kept the ship's boiler room in ship shape while the other sailor operated the huge engines which produced the power to move the vessel. He explained to the children, that since 1920, a major change in engine technology came about, when oil was introduced to fire the furnace thereby replacing the filthy black coal that had fuelled the steamships for over a century. Oil was not only cheaper, but cleaner too.

The children were fascinated with what they saw and heard aboard the small ship. And still more facts were heaped upon them. They also learned that steamships could travel between continents faster than any other vessels. (That was true then, but of course, today we have modern ocean liners that run on diesel, and nuclear powered military ships).

Beate's brother was in his element. He asked all sorts of questions of the two crewmen. One of his inquiries concerned his puzzlement over the word "lines," when referring to ships. The men explained that these ships, sail on a specific route or regular line, therefore, they were named "line." A perfect example was the ship they were sailing on which ran from San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan and back.

At the end of the voyage, the children had learned a great deal about ships in general. They had the best time in the galley, when they were invited for breakfast of pancakes, thick syrup, and tall jugs of hot coffee. Beate tried coffee for the first time, having only had cocoa previously. She was not very happy with it, and when the crewmen saw the face she made, they switched her drink to some sweet and creamy cocoa, which made her feel very happy and pampered.

When the children had seen and heard enough, they excused themselves and came up on deck. Sometimes they walked the whole deck, other times they played ping pong or shuffleboard, and occasionally just watched the ship glide over the waves. They were always punctual for meals.

At the conclusion of their voyage, the children were taken by complete surprise, when the two seamen who befriended them, came looking for them to shake their hands, and say their good-byes. They wished the children lots of luck good health, and the best of everything for the future. Then they took each child's hand and pressed a large silver coin into it. The children politely thanked the two men with a curtsy by Beate, and a deep bow by the brother in recognition of their extreme kindness. They parted in great excitement to show their parents their newly acquired riches. The parents in turn, were much impressed with the generosity of these two men, and made the comments: *"My dear children, let these silver coins be a good luck charm for you, and a constant reminder of all the good people and times you were blessed with on your voyage."*

STORMY WEATHER

In the main, the family had a serene passage on the Pacific Ocean. The weather had nicely cooperated with their voyage, and the family were enjoying the best of times since they had left Berlin. However, on the very last evening of their cruise, during the dinner hour, a sudden change of life at sea occurred. The ship endured heavy pitching in rough waters, and the passengers had gotten the worst of it.

It was customary to celebrate the end of the cruise with a gala night of good food and drink and a masquerade party. Beate's family had not planned on attending such an affair because they lacked the proper dress for the occasion. It was enough for them to have caught their ship on time, and be crossing the ocean to a new home in America. They were now looking forward to their last dinner aboard, and hoped it would be just as nice as all the previous ones.

Because of a shift in direction of the wind, the sea began to show signs of turbulence as it swung the ship back and forth. The family walked in formation toward their reserved table, holding onto each other and anything which looked sturdy. The father was bringing up the rear, but very poorly. He was elderly and needed assistance in keeping his balance. A solicitous waiter gave him his arm and helped him into his chair.

Beate's mother was admiring this evening's table setting of fine linen, beautiful glassware, heavy silver ware, and exquisite china. The orchestra was playing rather loudly which made conversation a little difficult. Within minutes the regular waiter greeted the family in his usual friendly manner, and presented them with the evening's fancy menu. There was a choice of international dishes to chose from which read like a list of foreign dignitaries. The father suggested that they disregard their usual fare, and be a little more adventurous in their tastes, by trying something different and perhaps exotic to remember the very last dinner aboard the ship.

Table service was naturally a bit slow due to the ship's tossing and turning, which also caused furniture to move about, and wall objects to cut loose and roll on the floor. The unwelcome disturbance pretty much disrupted the evening's program to everyone's consternation. Passengers in their elegant evening dress, were leaning up against walls and holding on for dear life. Others held firmly onto the railing of the staircase for support , as they walked gingerly to their tables, afraid to flex a muscle for fear of breakage. The once luxurious, elegantly appointed dining room had turned into utter chaos with flying debris everywhere. Beate and her family wished they had stayed in their cabins and done without dinner that evening.

In the midst of all the confusion, the ship's orchestra continued playing unperturbed by the convulsion of the sea. No doubt, this was not the first time that the musicians had to "play" out a storm. Beate could see from the frowning faces on many of the dinner guests that they were nervous about their physical well-being and the outcome of the evening's gala event.

At times she herself had to hold onto the seat of her chair, while both chair and table were hobbling all over the floor, and had to be retrieved once or twice. Throughout the turbulence, the topsy-turvy appearance of the dining room seemed conspicuously funny to Beate. The beautiful, heavy ornamental mirrors and valuable paintings hanging on the walls were tilting in all directions. The elaborate dishes broken to pieces, and expensive silverware were spilled across the dining room floor. Passengers were frightened, and didn't know what to do, whether to stay or return to their cabins. However, Beate's brother was a picture of calmness throughout the entire drama. His alert mind clung to every word the sea captain announced over the public address system. Each message ended with a reassuring warning to stay calm and be careful in moving about.

After several hours of great inconvenience to the passengers and staff, the storm abated, and the ship became less erratic. The damage to the dining room and entertainment area was quickly cleared away, and the gala celebration got started. The ship's orchestra began to play a program of soft, and melodious music setting the tone for a long evening of fun and laughter as it was meant to be.

While the ship was not quite steady yet, the waiter appeared at the family's table with a large tray of dishes, held high above his head. As he removed the individual salad plates and placed them in front of each member of the family, Beate noticed that only a single leaf of lettuce was marooned on the plates. No doubt, the remainder of the mixed salad had fallen off on his way from the kitchen. Well, this turned out to be a real fiasco with everyone laughing out loud.

When the waiter realized what had happened, he quickly collected all the plates, in a fluster, and took them back to the kitchen. A few minutes later, he came walking back with a slight wavering to his gait because he had not fully recovered from the swaying of the ship. In an attempt to give his usual meticulous service, he held the tray firmly to make sure that he brought everybody a complete dinner. The family enjoyed a spectacular meal consisting of Salisbury Steak, Beef Wellington, baked

potatoes, vegetables, and vintage wine, followed by rich French pastry instead of the usual Struddle the family was in the habit of ordering. By the end of the meal, the ship was back on a steady course. The family were much amused, and could hardly keep a straight face whenever the waiter came to their table. They thought that he had unintentionally created a hilariously situation. Quite unexpectedly, the family had a wonderful time without the worry of a fancy frock and gown.

At the conclusion of their last delightful dinner aboard the great ship "City of Los Angeles," Beate and her family said good-bye to their friendly waiter. The father put a few American bills into his hand, and the family went back to their cabins and started to pack and prepare for the next day's disembarkation in San Francisco.

Doubtless to say, it was a most fabulous and eventful crossing to remember for years to come. There was just one last detail to consider. The family had enjoyed themselves to the fullest on the ship, but they only thought of themselves. They now felt guilt-ridden, and a terrible remorse for not having given any thoughts and thanks to dear aunt Clara and her family for the enormous sacrifices they had made so that the family could enjoy being pampered on a grand cruise, instead of becoming victims of a Nazi death camp

CHAPTER IX

ARRIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO

A tug boat had the large steamer in tow as they came into the San Francisco Bay, the strait leading into California. The captain made an announcement that the ship was approaching something spectacular that was not be missed, namely the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge. Everybody scrambled onto the deck to get a good look at the west coast's symbol of liberty, and gateway to freedom. All spectators were jubilant at the sight of this amazing engineering marvel, and felt humbled and delighted that they had reached the shores of America. The sight of the grand bridge together with the early morning sun and fresh ocean air brought to mind the feeling of freedom for all passengers. Most of the passengers prayed for those who had helped them to escape their enslavement, and for future good health and prosperity for themselves in the new country.

It was like a dream come true. The deck was the gathering place of lots of happy faces and a cheering crowd. The great joy of having reached the end of their voyage was stamped on their bright faces .

While the ship was sailing slowly toward the dock, the passengers had an excellent vantage point from which to admire the beautiful view of "the city by the bay." The city of San Francisco, high upon a hill, with its cool breeze, seemed to be beckoning the refugees to come up on its shore. The beautiful pastel-colored houses dotting the hills in the background, looked very appealing to the many homeless newcomers. Big tears swelled in the eyes of Beate's family as they regarded with awe the view of the single-span bridge. They felt uplifted and totally released from their former bondage and daily worries. What better sight was there to behold than the wide open port of California to welcome them to their new homeland?

Beate and her family, plus a small contingent of fellow refugees, those last remnants of Europe's Jewry, were struck by the

panorama encircling them, and could not believe their eyes that they had come this far, and were about to step onto safe and friendly ground.

When the steamship docked, a group of Immigration Officials came aboard for passport inspection. The passengers were interrogated in spite of their valid visas. It was only a slight delay to make sure that everything was in good order for them to go ashore.

Before the passengers could at last em'ark, they were first placed under quarantine for a day. This action was necessary to be sure that no one was carrying any contagious diseases which might spread. After the refugees had served their confinement, as well as the crew aboard the ship, everybody was given permission to leave the ship.

The family was instructed to first go to the baggage section on the dock in order to claim their big suitcases. Beate's father handed the clerk a claim ticket, and then picked up all the heavy pieces of luggage with the help of his son. It was unbelievable, that the four large pieces of luggage did not become separated nor lost on the way with all the many transfers they were subjected to on both land and sea.

With luggage in hand they were directed to a small motor boat to take them to nearby "Angel Island." This small island was the equivalent to "Ellis Island," - another small island in New York harbor. Both of these places were for the express purpose of formally examining immigrants for health reasons before they were allowed into the country.

The family and their fellow refugees were welcomed to the United States at a makeshift receiving station which resembled an army camp. The original buildings had a few days earlier burned to the ground. A series of temporary tents were set up to serve as examination rooms, sleeping quarters, eating facilities, restrooms, showers, and Immigration Offices.

A friendly staff of federal employees, volunteers, such as the Salvation Army and nuns from the Bay area churches, made sure that the recent arrivals were well taken care of. These fine people helped with the paper work, and made any necessary phone calls to

the immigrant's American sponsors. They were a tremendous help to the foreigners in easing the initial transition into a new life.

That night on "Angel Island," the family went to bed without removing their clothes, except for their shoes, because of the communal sleeping accommodations. Beate and her family were quite used to this kind of arrangement from past experiences. The family dropped off to sleep with a wonderful feeling of great joy and peace, while looking forward to a new beginning.

The night temperature on the little island had dropped a few degrees from a comfortable noon high of about 57o F. It was fall, and because they were sleeping in light tents, they were glad to use the blankets provided for them.

The mother and children had no trouble falling asleep. They slept like angels on "Angel Island." Only the father was not quite ready to retire for the night, he stood outside the tent to have his last smoke for the day. As he drew on his cigarette, he felt an easing of all the tension and anxiety, which had been consuming him since they left their homeland. He could not remember a time in recent years when he had felt at peace with himself for having done everything possible to save his family. Before turning in, he muttered a prayer to express his appreciation and gratitude to God and aunt Clara for the family's survival.

The next morning, the family awoke to the delightful aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and stacks of pancakes set up for breakfast on long picnic tables outdoors. The family had gotten used to the American foods on the ship; and this morning's tasty meal was eaten up with much gusto and appreciation. The family took their time over breakfast, and admired the view spread out before them. The early morning sunshine felt so good on their backs. They were left to their own thoughts.

Beate's father was the first to return to reality, and the business at hand. He made some inquiries about the city which they were about to visit. Beate and her family had plans to meet with some local people who were good friends of aunt Clara. These people had advance knowledge of the German family's arrival in San Francisco, and wished to make their acquaintance. In the meantime, aunt Clara had telegraphed some money to these

people to turn over to the refugee family for incidental costs of food, hotel expenses and train tickets to New York

THE BEAUTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

One of the friendly volunteers on "Angel Island," assisted the family with making a call to the American sponsor's friends. These people were happy to hear that the family had arrived safely, and gave instructions as to which hotel to check-in, and to be ready for a car pick-up to their home at noon time. The family easily found the small hotel in mid-town, and went to their room to freshen up. Since it was early in the day, they decided to do some sightseeing on their own. They walked the streets near the hotel to get a look at the store-windows and the public at large.

Beate was immediately captivated by the charm of the city and its well-dressed populace. The family came to Market Street, which was a long and wide street with fashionable stores, one of which was a large Department Store, and a famous hotel which had a history of a tremendous shaking during the 1906 earthquake of the city.

They stopped in front of a small shoe-store to get a look at the latest fashion in footwear. Beate suddenly complained that her old shoes were pinching her toes. Her father, in a jovial mood, looked into his thin wallet and pulled out a hidden ten dollar bill, which he had kept for an emergency. Since they were coming into some money in a few hours, which was to be delivered to them through aunt Clara's friends, he thought it would be safe to part with his precious last bill, and thereby make his little daughter happy.

The whole family helped Beate select a pair of brown lace-shoes with square toes and foam rubber soles. Beate was extremely happy with her first pair of American-made shoes. She left her old shoes behind, and stepped out of the store feeling very Westernized.

Next, they came to Powell and Market Streets, the corner where the famous San Francisco cable car makes its turn-around. A large crowd of spectators had gathered at the corner turn-table, to watch this mechanical operation. Beate's brother stepped

forward very excitably to follow the single red cable-car coming down Powell Street to the end of the line, and then turn around. Upon making its complete circle, the car was then pulled back up, by means of a cable imbedded in the center of the street, all the way to the top of the hill where it met California Street, and then changing to a downhill course until the end of its run at Fisherman's Wharf.

Many years later, as a young woman, Beate returned to her beloved San Francisco to visit with her cousins Inge and Gita and their parents, who had settled in San Francisco, with the help of Beate's father as sponsor.

San Francisco had undoubtedly made an immense impression on Beate. She could not get this beautiful city with its mild climate, pastel-colored homes, and friendly people out of her mind. Her heart was somehow left there for her to go back to claim it. Beate never forgot the time she and her family had watched the little red cable car turn around, and a perfect stranger approach the father.

While the family had their eyes fixed on the cable-car, a well-dressed man kept looking at Beate's brother. When the father caught his glance, the man politely tipped his hat and apologized for staring at the young boy. He explained that he only wanted to help the family. He had noticed that Beate's brother was wearing an outlandish looking suit, especially the breeches, and thought he might offer him a perfectly good pair of long pants he no longer wore. The stranger went on to explain his direct forwardness, the reason being, that he too was a "greenhorn," an immigrant, once upon a time. Now that he has succeeded in life, he wished to be charitable, and do a small "mitzvah," – a good deed for someone less fortunate. The father at first was dumbfounded by the proposal, but later, realized the goodness in the man's heart. Nevertheless, he thanked the man for his kind offer by saying in his limited English, "thank you, but we couldn't." and then urged the family to move on with their sightseeing. When they had distanced themselves from the stranger, the mother asked what the man wanted of him. She was told the unbelievable story to which she answered: *"You see American streets are not paved with gold,*

as we were always led to believe, but its people have a heart of gold!"

The father agreed with the mother's comment. He then looked at his son, and all of a sudden it dawned on him that the boy did stand out from the rest of the boys on the street because of his European outfit. He then promised to buy him new clothes to make him look like a real American boy as soon as they got settled in New York.

When the family returned to their hotel, they were greeted by a middle-aged gentleman in the lobby, who in a friendly manner, welcomed them to his country. The family was very happy to make his acquaintance, and to be invited to his home.

Beate was very excited about seeing her first American home. On the way to the house, she got a glimpse of the beautiful Golden Gate Park with its acres of lush forest and splendid landscaping. The gentleman pointed out the bandstand in the park where he and his wife often attend afternoon concerts.

The family were told that the park runs from the center of the city all the way down to the Pacific Ocean. The newcomers enjoyed this part of the ride because they could see the beautiful manicured lawns and sculptured gardens, and particular the comfortable park benches scattered throughout, which reminded them of the last few months in Berlin, when going to their once beautiful parks was no longer a pleasure for them because of the yellow painted park benches designated for the Jewish population .

The family had spent an enjoyable afternoon not with strangers it seemed, but with friends who were very hospitable, and who just couldn't do enough for them. After several hours of friendly talk in a combination of Yiddish and gesturing, combined with good food and drink, the family felt relaxed and accepted into their society. Beate hated to leave their attractive and comfortable home. However, they had to get up early the next morning to catch a train to take them cross-country to aunt Clara's house. At the end of their wonderful visit, Beate and her family thanked the good people for their kind invitation and wonderful refreshments, and kissed and embraced each other, and then sadly parted company. They had many miles to go and promises to keep.

The following day the family boarded a diesel train destined for aunt Clara's place. No one seemed to be exhausted from their preceding miles of travel because of the excitement of going to New York. As the east-bound train carried them through the mountainous region of the country, the family sat comfortably in a day coach in rows of double seats. The view of the passing cities was very different from the earlier sparse vistas on their land journey. The children never tired of staring out of the window at the bustling cities with their lights glowing from tall buildings in the evenings, and the heavy traffic on long-winding highways during the daytime, which were never too far from the small single-family home communities. Beate and her brother were mesmerized by the vast fields of crops and livestock grazing in the pastures, which looked so much healthier than the animals they had seen during their tour through Russia.

At other times, the children amused themselves by taking long walks through the moving cars. The dining car was open at all hours. Lots of people came to take refreshments. Beate's brother still had the change in his pocket, which he had earned from running errands for the diabetic German lady, and converted into dollars in San Francisco. Occasionally, he bought soft drinks and snacks for himself and his sister while they played cards in the dining car.

For sleeping accommodations, the family found lots of empty seats, which they themselves turned into beds. The cross-country trip took roughly a week's time. Toward the end of their traveling, their fatigue was starting to show by causing irritability and impatience with the motion of the train, as well as spending all their time in close proximity. They grew tired of the multiple stops along the way, the constant whistle blowing at every station stop. The family was hoping that the train would soon come to a halt for all times.

Beate was dreaming of grandiose things happening to her in America, while the train was drawing closer to its destination. When she thought back of what the family went through in an effort to get away from all the turmoil, she was convinced that it was not only the help they received from the Jewish Aid Society,

the American Consulate, and most important, the American sponsors. She believed that God in his infinite wisdom had a plan for them. Thank God that plan came to fruition.

CHAPTER X

ARRIVING IN NEW YORK

After their enjoyable cross-country trip, the family finally arrived at New York's Pennsylvania Railroad Station. Two men were already pacing the platform up and down in search of the wandering Jewish family. The station was dimly lit as the four tired travelers alighted from their train. Even though the sponsors had a photo of the newcomers, they were easily recognizable by their foreign attire and frightened looks.

Beate let her eyes wander over the station. A darkness surrounded her since it was an early autumn evening. Her heart skipped a beat as she reflected on the Berlin Railroad Station, and the evening of their departure on a trip that was now winding down. In her mind's eye she could see the familiar home she had to give up for the sake of the family's safety and freedom. This evening at the New York railway station it was entirely different. She could talk in a normal voice, even scream if she wanted to because there was no Gestapo – Secret Police to arrest her.

She became aware of two men rushing towards the family with outstretched arms to welcome them. Without a doubt, they were the meritorious saviors. These were the good people who had connected with them through letters of labor and love. They greeted and introduced each other, and communicated in all manner of words and gestures, readily understood by all parties.

The sponsor's outpouring of affection for people they only knew through correspondence, was almost incomprehensible to young Beate. Their show of fondness and sociability for a family of strangers, was so overwhelming to Beate, that she could not hold back her tears. The parents tried to reciprocate the attention lavished on them by speaking very slowly in their German so that the Americans could pick up the essence of the conversation in a form of Yiddish – a language spoken by many European Jews and their descendents on other continents. However, the step-son of the older man, spoke an excellent German, which he had learned in

his native Lithuania as a young student when his country had been dominated by the Germans from time to time. Having him on hand broke the language barrier, and eased the tension.

After the first awkward moments of getting acquainted, everybody became more relaxed. Beate only watched the adults, but her brother, who felt confident with the new language entered the conversation. The men were quite impressed with his intelligence and said of him: *"Here is a young man with a bright future."*

Beate's mother was at first nervous and felt a bit uncomfortable during the initial meeting with the two men. Little by little she became less tense, and addressed the sponsors in a few well chosen words in an attempt to show her heart-felt appreciation for all that they had done for them during the past two years. She thanked them repeatedly for rescuing the family so that they could have another chance to live out their lives, and see the children grow up in a free society. Her halted speech was well received and acknowledged for her sincere sentiments.

MEETING AUNT CLARA

When Beate and her family had at last reached the home of their guardian angel, also known as aunt Clara, in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York, they found her standing in front of the entrance to a small old town-house to welcome them. She appeared to Beate exactly as she had pictured her. She was small of stature, with a friendly face, having kindly eyes the color of sky-blue, which beamed as she met and embraced her humble refugee family. Her gray hair was neatly brushed back and pinned into a bun, in like manner to the "Omi," - grandmother of Berlin, as she was affectionately called by her grandchildren. She had died several years prior to the family's emigration plans, and thereby was spared the trauma of resettling in America.

Aunt Clara, the matriarch of her family, was very excited. She had to pause a moment to deal with a lump which had settled in her throat, and tears streaming down her cheeks, before she could hug

her small band of bewildered wanderers. Her face lit up as she reached out to each and every one of her new family members who had come a long way to meet and to thank her for the good will and compassion she had shown in getting them out of a critical situation. Today was the special day for the two families to come together to celebrate a dream come true, which was so desperately longed for in all their correspondence.

Much time was spent in hugging and embracing each other at the front-door as neighbors looked on. Ther the family entered the home. The sponsor family lived very modestly in the rented lower-part of an old brownstone. Their apartment had hardly enough room for a small family of four. The older son slept on a cot in the tiny breakfast-room, which was situated outside a small kitchen. The bathroom was just a nook between these two rooms. Beate wondered where they were going to fit another four people? She would not have minded staying at a nearby hotel. However, a neat scheme was all worked out whereby the immigrant family was to take over the living room, where the younger son of the sponsors slept. He worked at nights at the Post Office, therefore, there was plenty of room for the house guests.

Aunt Clara could not take her eyes off young Beate. She was growing up into an attractive teen-ager, and perhaps a good catch for her handsome nineteen year-old son, a thought which might have crossed her mind. Aunt Clara put all sorts of questions to young Beate, but unfortunately, the child did not understand her until the aunt reverted to the Yiddish language. Beate made every effort to politely respond to the kind lady. She liked her new aunt immediately, and tried to show her love and affection by frequently putting her arms around her.

The family started to feel more comfortable after getting over the initial culture shock, and becoming better acquainted with their sponsors. A table was already set up for dinner with many interesting-looking dishes and drinks. Beate and her family felt ravenously hungry, because they had not eaten a decent meal since their visit with the San Francisco family. When Beate's father had the opportunity, he told the sponsors all about meeting those

wonderful friends of theirs. He couldn't praise them enough, and thanked them for having arranged the mutually happy meeting. He also let it be known that the family appreciated the loan of money they received that paid for their hotel stay and the train tickets to New York, and that these funds would be repaid as soon as possible. Aunt Clara's husband assured the family that there was no rush, and to think of nothing else but this very moment of celebrating their arrival.

Aunt Clara's dinner was a sumptuous fare compared to what the family had known over the past few years. The festive dining table was set up in a different fashion than the family was accustomed to. There was a conventional, plastic tablecloth, and simple dinnerware. Everything looked very appetizing with an East-European flavor. There were such dishes as chopped herring salad, borscht soup, which were all new to Beate's taste. In addition, there were also the usual Jewish dishes such as chopped liver, gefilte fish, stuffed cabbage, boiled chicken, potato kugel, green salad, a braided challah, honey cake, and hot and cold drinks. The table was brimming with good things to eat. It seemed like a feast for a king. The family were overwhelmed with so much food, they didn't know what to eat first, and loving every bit of it. The family felt very fortunate to have been sponsored by this kind family, and to be given such a wonderful reception.

The uncle, a Hebrew teacher by profession, stood up at the head of the table, with a lifted glass of wine in his hand giving a brakha – a blessing for the food they were about to eat, and thanks to the Almighty for having saved the German family. Then aunt Clara added her prayers and thanks for the family having survived their arduous journey to be with them on this very day. After her came one of the sons who lifted his glass to say "L'Chaim" - to life, and wished the refugee family a bright and happy future.

After a few days, Beate and her folks met aunt Clara's sister and her family at a party given in honor of the new arrivals. It was a wonderful opportunity for Clara's larger family to meet the refugees in person. These friendly people had also contributed to the bank deposit for the benefit of the newcomers, which, of course, was essential for the completion of the emigration process.

Fortunately, the money never had to be used by the family, and was quickly returned to the generous donors. The grateful family kissed everybody many times over. The relatives took the family's gratitude in stride. In fact they felt slightly uncomfortable with such an outpouring of accolades. It was not expected of them to be rewarded for doing something so fundamental and natural to them.

CHAPTER XI

A NEW LIFE

Eventually, Beate became acclimated to her new surroundings. However, every now and then she would revert to her past with a heavy heart. She missed all the comforts and luxuries that came with her previous way of life. At first, the family managed to live with aunt Clara in overcrowded conditions. The parents soon realized that they were faced with the situation of two maturing teen-agers. The close sleeping facility was no longer fitting for two adolescents. The parents were bedding down on the living room sofa. Beate was sleeping on a converted club chair and folding chair pushed together. By the following morning the chairs had moved apart, and Beate's buttock was hanging down to the floor. Her brother did not have it any easier.

Something had to be done about finding an apartment for the family. Aunt Clara made inquiries in the neighborhood. A very small apartment, which was all that they could afford at the time, was located within walking distance of aunt Clara's house. It was quite an improvement, but Beate's brother still had to sleep on the living-room couch. Beate, on the other hand, had a tiny room of her own with a window facing the street, and the trolley-car noise which she had to get used to.

The children's long vacation had to come to an end some time. One day while still living at aunt Clara's house, a stern-looking man rang the door-bell and introduced himself as a truant officer. He asked why the children were not in school. The excuse given by aunt Clara did not satisfy his question. He said, that in no uncertain terms, the children belonged in school, and the sooner they were registered the better it would be for all concerned. The auntie explained to Beate and her brother, that someone must have seen them hanging around in front of the house, and informed on them. She agreed with the truant officer that it was high time for both to find their places in school, and to continue with their

education. The next day she led them to the Principal's Office at the nearby school.

Beate and her brother were very happy once they returned to the class-room. They had sorely missed going to school, and had been terribly bored with so much time on their hands. In the meantime, they had picked up a little more English on their own, by listening to the radio. They were eager to make the transition into a new and different school system. A couple of years later, when they were capable of doing the work. They were skipped a few grades, and managed to graduate on time according to their ages with the rest of their school-mates.

WORKING HARD

While a small circle of friends and relatives left behind in war-torn Germany were having a rough time, Beate and her family were also struggling with carving out a new life in America.

They now lived in peace, and that was worth more than anything else in the world. Both parents worked to support the family. Beate's father attended night school to improve his English. Now the table was turned, and the children were helping their parents with learning to speak the new language. Beate's father accepted the first job that was offered to him. Refugees, in those days had little choice in that matter. An agency had found him a janitorial position in a hospital. This was quite a change in profession for the father, but he did not flinch from his manual work, for he knew that it was only temporary until something more suitable came along. He did not belittle the work either, for he was glad to be earning his own living. As a matter of fact, he was good humored about it, and always told the family that the best part of his job was the free meals that went with it. More often than not, he brought home some extra desserts which the caring cafeteria manager handed him because he knew there were growing children at home.

After Beate's father made some headway with the language, he established a small men's apparel business with a silent partner providing the money for the inventory. At the end of the year, the

store showed not enough profit to continue, therefore, he had to give it up. After the father's first attempt at private ownership failed, he was fortunate in finding a position, with the help of a distant relative, in a women's apparel business. Beate's father was hired as a glorified shipping clerk. This type of work earned him a steady income, however, it was not enough to feed a family of four. The father was perfectly healthy, but in his middle years. He had married late in life and was at the moment 59 years old, with precious little time left for accumulating w alth for a high life-style, and a comfortable retirement in the near future.

Beate's mother was called into service to supplement their earnings so that the family could live more comfortably. The mother was ten years younger than her husband, in excellent health and very eager to help with the family finances. With both parents working, Beate and her brother lived in a two-income household. They were the original "latch-key kids." Most parents in a refugee household were forced to go to work. The children all carried keys to let themselves into the apartment, which was considered a matter of necessity and quite a normal practice in the 1940s.

Beate's mother worked very hard first as a salesperson and later as a factory worker. She actually had no experience working outside the home. In the beginning she tried door-to-door selling ladies hosiery. So many other refugee women had proven that such a plan had merit. There was the "egg-lady" who canvassed the neighborhood with fresh eggs off a New Jersey farm delivered directly to the door in an old baby carriage. Other women peddled vegetable, all trying to make ends meet, and to have a little extra cash so that they could send their children to college.

Beate's mother was a very attractive woman. She did not particularly look German nor Jewish for that matter. With a winning smile and a very persuasive way about her, she had little talking to do and had the customers practically eating out of her hands. It was also a matter of convenience for the neighborhood women to have their hosiery supply brought right up to their doorstep.

Silk stockings came on the market in 1939. They were sold in all Department Stores of course, which were not always close to

home. It appeared to be a lucrative business. Then production of silk stockings was halted because of the outbreak of WWII which started with the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor. The bombed area was an inlet on the southern coast of Oahu an island near Honolulu, Hawaii, which served as the site of an American naval base. During the war silk went into the production of parachutes urgently needed in the air war over the Pacific. The outbreak of the war was coincidentally a little more than a year after the family had crossed the Pacific Ocean. They were lucky to have come at the time they did, because all private passenger ships ceased operations with the incident at Peal Harbor.

Beate's mother was forced to give up her new business, and look for other work. She was not without resources. Part of her educational training included cooking and sewing. Sewing became one of her hobbies as well, from which Beate greatly benefited. She had always sewn Beate's pretty dresses from remnants of the father's fabric stock. With her great talent for sewing, she immediately found a job behind a sewing machine. She not only made a good living, but was serving the war effort at the same time.

The work took a lot of strength of lifting heavy woolen navy coats. At the end of the day she was exhausted from work and the long subway ride to the factory. She never complained. After the war, she continued working at the same factory which was converted to peace-time industry of women's dresses. Beate's mother was an excellent and committed worker until she reached her retirement at the age of 62.

The parents never had it easy in their adopted country. They worked hard and long hours to support their modest life-style, and to put something away for a rainy day. Never, in all their years of hard work did they ever allow themselves a vacation away from home. Later, when the time came for Beate's wedding in San Francisco, they took a plane for the first time. Not long after their initial flight, they repeated their visits to California when a grandson sweetened their lives.

CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES

Beate had put all her unhappy experiences behind her, and was now looking toward making a new beginning. In order to cut old ways and ties, and to quickly Americanize, she stopped speaking in her native tongue, which she later regretted. Since America's involvement in the war, ex-Germans living in the States naturally became very suspicious and unpopular. Beate did not want to be recognized as a foreigner. With a heavy sc'.edule of reinventing herself, she not only lost touch with her mother-tongue, but with her dearest childhood friend back in Berlin.

The years passed quietly while the family adjusted to a new language and customs. Their lives had rebounded, but of course, it was much easier for the children. The parents found it more difficult to erase the deep hurt endured at the hands of their own countrymen. They also thought back of the hardships they had to deal with during the bleak years before coming to America, and how they struggled to merely survive. In back of their minds was always the fear of being arrested if they didn't adhere to the rules of the country. And then there was the haunting anxiety of perhaps having been left behind to perish as so many of their dear friends and relatives did.

Beate's mother never fully recovered from her losses of material wealth, and the former good life. Next to her children, her home was her great pride and joy, which she watched painfully being liquidated or given away to adorn other people's homes. Often, Beate would catch her sigh and say: "Bei uns Zuhause war es anders!" ("It was different by us at home.")

Despite the many hurdles the family had to overcome, they made big strides in transforming their lives into a brand new culture. Beate became a working girl first and later attended college for a number of years while working full time, and eventually receiving her BA degree in English Literature, which led to a twenty-three year long career associated with a college library. Her brother tried his hand at several office jobs, and eventually went into business for himself in the tourist industry, where he could use his knowledge of German.

The father, out of a great sense of gratitude and duty, expeditiously made good on all of his promises, by returning every penny he had ever received from the sponsors. If it were not for the many "gifts of love," – monthly checks sent to the family in Berlin throughout their waiting period of their emigration process, they would have surely gone under. The financial assistance they so sorely needed was understood to be just a loan to be repaid as soon as they were able to do so.

Eventually, Beate's parents' lives were restored to their former dignity. They were able to relax a bit as their spirits rebounded, and their financial situation improved. They had transformed their lives from the poor immigrants to proud Americans in a period of just five years.

The "swear in" day for the parents' citizenship and documentation stating that they had been formally declared citizens, was a big event for the whole family to enjoy. Both father and mother had been studying painstakingly for their oral test. The children were made citizens under the father's papers. Later, after reaching the age of 18 they received their own naturalization – citizen papers.

Beate's mother was having difficulties with memorizing a large number of facts that made little sense to her. However, the magistrate at the Brooklyn Courthouse was very considerate and lenient with her when he saw her struggling with the answers. The parents great success of passing their citizenship examination became a cause for celebration. It was a highlight in their complicated lives. The children looked on proudly, and kissed and hugged their parents for a job well done.

In order to do honor to this momentous occasion, and to mark this happy day with special memories, the family went to a nearby restaurant and ordered a truly American meal. They had a complete lunch of hamburgers, French fries, chicken, steak, and vegetables. And, on top of all that, they still had room enough for an assortment of desserts with apple pie their favorite and hot drinks. Needless to say, they had enjoyed themselves to the fullest, and had made the celebration into a memorable day.

CHAPTER XII

REVISITING OLD ROOTS

With all the advancement Beate had made, and the extraordinary experiences of a journey that will remain forever in her memory, she still had lapses into the past. Occasionally, she looked back to her wonderful childhood, which came to an abrupt end, and was followed by a new beginning in a foreign country. How fortunate she was to have escaped from the dreadful Holocaust which swept over Europe. But still, Beate was troubled by the question, why were these crimes allowed to happen. Why was there no organized help to prevent the greatest inhumanity among men in the twentieth century?

Beate never forget that she and her family owed a great debt of gratitude to a handful of people in both America and Germany In retrospect, the family was extremely lucky in having caught the last train out of Berlin, when in fact, the chances of escaping their tyranny were almost nil. The family was miraculously guided every step of the way of their long journey by a small contingent of unselfish, dedicated ESCORTS; whose collective efforts, combined with God's help brought them to safety.

But at long last, Beate came to the realization that some things in life are worth going back to. That something or somebody was her dear friend Dorle whom she could never forget. Beate was grateful to the Almighty for letting her live long enough to make such a wonderful meeting between two old friends possible.

In the spring of 1999, Beate made a sentimental journey returning for the first time to the city of her birth. A period of nearly six decades had elapsed since the two young girls said good-bye, and thought they would never see each other again. But, now that they were in their golden years, and their state of health was not what it used to be, it was a good time to get together. Another basis for the trip was an invitation to revisit the homeland, with the compliments of the Berlin Senate. This was a means by which the peacetime German government, although to a small

degree, was to compensate for losses sustained by its former Jewish citizens during the Nazi era. Beate had applied for this one-time opportunity to go back many years ago. After a prolonged wait, she got her chance to repatriate. Before embarking on her trip, she was asked if there was anything in particular she would have them do for her. Her reply was naturally to locate her long lost friend. They were more than glad to help find her. The rest of the return trip is recent history.

What a joy for Beate, after such a long interval, to see her beloved friend again, and to resume their special friendship. It was a remarkable visit. The two friends walked and talked of by-gone times when they were young children and had so much fun together. Indeed, the highlights of the trip were naturally the reunion with dear Dorle, and going about on foot in the old neighborhood for the pleasure of seeing familiar places, and to follow the life course of their youth.

Surprisingly enough, the old neighborhood had changed very little in all the time Beate was away. The street she lived on was spared by the ravages of war. The apartment building was in tact, and the various shops near the corner of the street were as she remembered them, especially the bakery, dairy, and the butcher shops. At the opposite corner of the street Beate recognized the huge tree with its wooden circular bench. Once you came to it, the girls were not far from the flower store. The old lady who ran the place loved the girls, because they would visit with her after school, and help sweep the floor behind the counter where she stood arranging her flowers for the customers. In return for their work the girls were given some wilted flowers to take home. Next they visited the bakery. Beate showed her son that this was the place where his grandmother, always took her long sheets of plum-cake, and had the baker, push them into the giant oven. Later, in America, grandma (Omi Lilly) still made these delicious cakes but on a smaller scale.

Half way down the street, Beate and company stopped in front of No. 21, where she had lived. With tears in her eyes Beate found the courage to get passed the front door and ring the bell of her former apartment. A kind Englishman opened the door, and was

curious as to what she wanted. Beate explained in halting speech her situation to him, whereupon the polite gentleman waved her into his apartment. He gave her free access to browse as much and as long as she needed to relive her past. She was thrilled to make the rounds of the rooms and look into every nook and cranny of her once happy home.

On closer inspection, Beate found a totally different apartment than she could remember. To start with it had been converted into two separate apartments because of a housing shortage after the war. The interior design and personal possessions of the present tenant were extremely modern. Everything seemed so much smaller to her. The "old look" was completely gone. In its place was kitsch, a whole lot of collections of posters and books crowding the walls. What ever happened to all the fine furniture? Who was enjoying the green foyer pieces, which Beate loved and hoped to use in a room of her own. Her original home did not exist for her any more. As she looked back into the past, she could hear familiar words often expressed by her parents during the early years of their American experience, such as: "Das war auf einmal!" ("Once upon a time!")

Both friends were the sole survivors of their respective families, but of course, they had created new generations. Together with her married son, who was accompanying her on the trip, Beate got a rousing welcome from the long lost friend. Dorle and her son Michael, were waiting for them in the lobby of their hotel at an appointed hour. Beate was slightly late from a morning sightseeing tour. Mother and son came tearing through the revolving door and anxiously surveyed the lobby for a familiar face. It didn't take long for the two friends to recognize each other, and to rush into each other's arms, and hold one another in a warm embrace. What great joy and flood of tears appeared on their faces as they stood together for an eternal moment savoring the sensation of their reunion! It took some time before they regained their equilibrium. In all their frenzy of a tight embrace, the mothers had completely forgotten to introduce each other's sons who were standing nearby watching this unusual display of tender feelings.

The meeting with her dearest friend Dorle was for Beate truly a momentous occasion, the likes of which she had never thought in her wildest imagination would ever be possible. It was a moment when time stood still, and the years of separation, had been compressed into a single day. Their meeting was the promise of a rekindled friendship of two devoted school-friends, who had never failed to keep the memory of each other alive.

The coming back to her former homeland, made Beate reflect what an extraordinary journey she and her family had made in the heat of the Holocaust. She remembers that throughout the trip, the family felt as though they were being pursued, and there was that persistent fear of perhaps missing their connections through a string of crossings into strange territories. It goes without saying that the family considered themselves very fortunate to have never been made the victims of the evil 'empire' that was visiting upon the Jews throughout Europe. And, all the while, young Beate's heart remained back in Berlin, aching for having to let go of her happy childhood, and uneasily awaiting a new way of life to begin.

Now at last as a seasoned citizen, Beate could say that her life had come full circle, and the journey was complete. She was blessed with regaining a precious friendship in which to relive her happy childhood, and to share the good times yet to come with her dear friend.

Still to this day, Beate is profoundly grateful to her beloved, departed father for having been a tower of strength during trying times, and for keeping the family together with his constant hope and optimism in making their way to the new world. She is also eternally grateful to aunt Clara for having saved the family from the murderous activities of the Nazi regime, and having survived the Jewish catastrophe. Beate can easily say, a father's growing concern and tenacious efforts to leave no stone unturned in protecting his family, facilitated a long journey on land and sea, to find personal freedom, and a brighter future in America. There is a saying: "The work praises the man!"

And that is how it was. In the end, good fortune smiled upon the family and they were able to enjoy a comfortable life in America. **≺≺ THE END ≻≻**

POST CARD WRITTEN BY BEATE SENT FROM HARBIN, Sept. 24, 1940

(Harbin - capital of Heilung-kiang province
in N.E. China.)

Baikal Lake sit. in the Buryat Mongol A.S.S.R.
(Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic)

To: Dorle Schuzius
Berlin, Wilmersdorf
Nassauische Str. 21
Germany

Dear Dorle: Will write in detail from America.

Now I am in Harbin. Did you receive my card and conveyed my regards? Unfortunately, I could not write, because it costs a lot of postage. As we travelled along the Baikal Lake (sea) we passed through 56 long tunnels. The train was very attractive.

In Moscow we received two rooms - 1 bedroom and 1 combination dinning room with a piano (organ). I sat down to the piano immediately.

Harbin is a beautiful city. Here one sees many people. In Moscow were even more people. In Moscow you could hardly cross the street. The cars hunk their horns constantly. We made a circular sightseeing tour. We also went down into the subway system on a 35 meter deep escalator.

Now, I send my best regards. Beate.

Please give regards to Mrs. Kelch, Mrs. Maske,..... and your mother and Klauz (brother), and all in the house!